

LESSON PLAN

Where Culture, History & Education are woven together.

GRADES 1-12

DURATION: 1-2 hours

PROJECT: Hogan Sweet Hogan



- ◆ Present information about the traditional aspects of the Navajo people.
- ◆ Students will use geometry and measuring skills to construct a model of a hogan. This can be done as a whole class project, partners or groups according to time and age group.
- ◆ Students can then write an article or do an oral presentation about the hogan, comparing it to their home or to other homes.

Learn suggested vocabulary

hogan, Dine', sweatlodge, shelter, ceremonial, talisman, hexagon, octagon, decagon, metate, and mano

OBJECTIVE:

Student will be able to:

Demonstrate knowledge of the hogan in Navajo Culture

Develop literacy, spelling and keyboarding or writing skills

Measure and use knowledge of geometric shapes

RESOURCES:

The Old Hogan, by Margaret Kahn Garaway, illustrated by Navajo artist,

Andrew Emerson Bia (ISBN # 0-9638851-0-3) (kaswinmark@yahoo.com),

The Hogan, the Traditional Navajo Home, Scott Thybony, Western National Parks Association, 1999.

ACTIVITIES:

Read a book or watch a video about the Navajo culture. Discuss the land and climate that would influence the type of housing available. If you can find the classic book, **The Old Hogan**, by Margaret Kahn Garaway, illustrated by Navajo artist, Andrew Emerson Bia (ISBN # 0-9638851-0-3) (kaswinmark@yahoo.com), read it to your class of any age to help explain the significance of the Hogan in the Navajo culture.

Use the attached plan to build a Hogan out of craft sticks. Discuss the math involved in creating the Hogan. Compare hogans with different numbers of sides...6, 8, 10. Learn the math vocabulary for these shapes.



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The traditional dwelling is part of the landscape and the simple lifestyle. It represents the universe, family, safety, stories, and ceremonies. The word hogan means home. All hogans have an entrance facing the east. (Even a square-cornered house follows this custom.) Many hogans have multiple sides, usually 6 or 8. A wood burning stove sits in the center with a stovepipe going through the open smoke hole. Canvas, old blankets, or carpet pieces may cover the packed earth floor. Modern hogans might have flagstone concrete, or plank flooring.

The dome or roof represents the sky and the floor is the earth. The earth shouldn't be covered. It reminds the *Dine'* of who they are and where they came from...their identity. The smoke hole is not covered when it rains or snows. The early hogan contained no decorations and very little furniture. The family kept a wooden fire poker (fire stick) near the hearth as a tool and a talisman for protection. When worn out it would be placed over the door to continue the protection. There was also a grinding stone (metate and mano) and a brush to clean it and stirring sticks for cooking. They stored belongings in chests or trunks and sometimes a chest of drawers or shelves along the walls. Bedding was folded up to clear the central space for daily activities. They used a cloth covered wooded box for a table. Bags of cornmeal hung behind the door- white cornmeal for morning prayers and yellow cornmeal for evening prayers.

Today most *Dine'* families maintain a hogan for ceremonies, such as life's blessings, births, weddings, a young woman's puberty, a soldier going to or returning from war, and healing. During ceremonies women sit on the north side and men sit on the south side. The singer (*hataalii*) sits on the west. After a hogan is built and furnished, the family builds a fire in the stove, then the head of the family or a singer blesses the home. Moving sunwise (circular path beginning in east, moving south, west, north, back to east), he blesses the main posts by smudging white cornmeal or pollen on them while saying a short prayer. This ceremony breathes life into the hogan and protects the occupants against danger.

The hogan is more than a shelter. It is a member of the family, built to make sense of the universe. It provides a place to live in harmony with the cycles and forces affecting all life. Raising the main pole is symbolic of the four sacred mountains, marking the boundary of the Navajo reservation. The mountains also represent earth woman, mountain woman, water woman, and corn woman. The fire in the center represents the North Star, around which life revolves.

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Families moved seasonally to find better grazing, water resources, or to be near firewood in winter. They often lived in separate summer and winter homes. Some built temporary summer shelters or shade houses *chaha'oh*. Most families also had a sweathouse *tacheeh* for cleansing.

Hogan styles:



(forked-pole and interior forked-pole)

(round)

(sweathouse)

1. Conical forked-pole Hogan '*alch'i adeez'a'*

The forked-pole is the male hogan and was the original style. It has 4 main poles, three of them forked. When interlocked, they create a frame to support the logs at the entry. It is said to protect the family as a father.

2. Round hogan also called the stacked log hogan *hooghan dah diit'ini* or *yaadah askani*

The round hogan is the female hogan and provides more room to care for you like a mother or grandmother.

3. Circular stone hogan

Found in treeless areas.

4. Four-legged hogan

It has leaning-log walls supported by four main posts. (vertical logs not horizontal)

Source: The Hogan, the Traditional Navajo Home, Scott Thybony, Western National Parks Association, 1999.

PROJECT & GRADE MODIFICATIONS:

For older students:

- Compare and contrast round and forked-pole hogan
- Research and reflect on historical significance of hogan in Dine' culture

For younger students:

- Work in groups to build round hogan
- Present oral report on life and ceremonies in hogan

EVALUATION:

Have students write a description of a Hogan or a story about a family Hogan. Have students give an oral presentation about the Hogan that was created.



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EXTENSION:

- ◆ Have students do an oral history investigative report, talking to family members about the family Hogan or early homes in family history that provided a special feeling of security and belonging.
- ◆ Investigate the science involved: why does a Hogan provide a cool environment in the summer and a warm home in the winter? Experiment with thermometers to test theories including less direct sunlight, different building materials, etc.

For additional information, Fieldtrips, Traveling trunks and support materials, Contact Director of Interpretation, Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site, PO Box 150 Ganado, AZ 86505 928-755-3475

NPS.GOV/HUTR for additional info and resources.

Please email your lesson plans and finished designs to hutr_ranger_activities@nps.gov