

Art as Contextualization: Using Visual Communication as Christian Missions in
Native American and Alaskan Cultures

Hali Gehring

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A. Todd Smith, MFA.
Thesis Chair

M. Stephen Glaze, Ph.D.
Committee Member

David Schweitzer, Ph.D.
Honors Professor

Date

Abstract

Contextualization is an important aspect of Christian ministries and cross-cultural missions to create sustaining churches around the world. There are many forms of communication that use contextualization for religious purposes, such as theatre, story, art, and dance. These important forms of communication can be used with cultural practices to contextualize the Gospel to different people groups. For Native Americans and Alaskans, artistic works that promote cultural heritage are highly regarded. A beadwork piece that explains the Gospel could be a creative way to contextualize to Native American and Alaskans.

Art as Contextualization: Using Visual Communication as Christian Missions in Native American and Alaskan Cultures

In 2002, Emil Her Many Horses, a member of the Native American Oglala Lakota Sioux of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, created a 3-D artwork to showcase Native sacrifice in the Vietnam War. Her Many Horses is trained in traditional Native beadwork and doll-making. He used his talents to communicate the Native American service in the Vietnam War and the impact said service had on Native American communities. Her Many Horses combined traditional techniques and styles with modern motifs, demonstrating his people's growing service in the United States (Edwards, 2006). Her Many Horses used a highly regarded cultural art form to communicate meaningful events and their effects on the community. Art has endless possibilities for communication, and Christians should use art as a way to contextualize the Gospel, specifically across cultures. Art can be used for contextualization of biblical truths through well thought out designs and the use of cultural art forms, specifically in Native Alaskan and American cultures.

Contextualization

The saving truth of the Gospel is for every people group around the world. Over the past few centuries, Christian beliefs have been centered in the Western hemisphere, leading to the thought that Christianity is a Western religion. Biblical Christianity originated in the modern Middle East and began drastically shifting to the West with the rise of the Catholic church in Western Europe and the reformation (Van Engen, 1996). The introduction of other religions, such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Daoism hindered the spread of Christianity across the eastern hemisphere and aided the shift to Europe (Vaughan, n.d.). After differences between

Protestant and Catholic beliefs arose in the church, Christian missionaries and explorers took advantage of the exploration of the Americas. From the 15th century to the 19th century, Christianity flourished through exploration and development of Western culture; it soon became centered within the Western hemisphere (Stefon et al., 2020). With this, the thought of Christianity as a Western, or even white man's, religion arose. Christian missionaries then shifted efforts from the age of exploration in the west to retracing their steps back to the east. By the end of the 20th century, Christianity became the "most widely disseminated religion on earth" with populations present in every continent (Stefon et al., 2020, Contemporary Christianity section, para. 161). Practicing Christians remain a small fraction of the population in many countries, but in others the Christian church continues to grow rapidly. The Christian church has several large divisions of cultural churches across the world, such as Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism (Vaughan, n.d.). The massive increase of Christian believers across the globe has "challenged the traditional dominance of Western Christianity" (Stefon et al., 2020, Contemporary Christianity section, para. 161). The history and context of the Bible clearly demonstrates that Western Christianity was not the initial goal, as it originated in the East and distinctly discusses the need for God in all cultural contexts and countries (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2016, Matt. 28:19). The cultural background within the text is not rooted in Western tradition but features cultural traditions of the time that often align with eastern practice of biblical values. Original biblical text was also written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, all middle eastern languages, but then later translated into various languages, such as English in the 15th Century (Jeffcoat, 2018). While Western Christianity is still a modern view that has impacts that carry through into present day, the Bible clearly

demonstrates in origin and text that God's plan of salvation has always been for all peoples of the all the earth.

Through the continuing globalization of Christianity, missionary tactics have changed. First, western cultures are no longer the predominant in sending Christian missionaries to other countries. Tactics have changed in modern missions because the model of Western missionaries being sent to undeveloped, uneducated Eastern peoples is not the reality. That mentality is unsuccessful in church growth. It became apparent that successful church plants in cross cultural ministry maintains partnership with the local population to implement cultural values and styles into Christianity. Creative ministry tactics became necessary, and contextualization became a common strategy in cross cultural ministry.

In the context of missions, contextualization most often refers to placing Christian beliefs and practices within a cultural context, though contextualization has a broad purpose and refers to a variety of ministry strategies. The definition of contextualize is "to place (something, such as a word or activity) in a context" (Merriam-Webster, n.d., Definition 1). The first example of contextualization is Jesus Christ Himself. As explained in John 1:14, Jesus practiced contextualization when He dwelt in flesh on earth to exemplify a godly life to believers (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2011/2016; Nweke & Onyenali, 2018). He did not compromise the truth of His divinity, rather He presented it in a way that would more effectively communicate to His audience: humans. In Christian circles, the concept of contextualization is often misunderstood as omitting or changing the truth of the Bible to be relative to peoples that are unreceptive to God. However, a truly biblical approach to contextualization is to place universal truths in the proper context to each individual person or people group.

Contextualization of Christianity is not a new idea by any means. Jesus exemplified it in His life ministry, and it is further evident in Scriptures, as well as in modern church history. Nweke and Onyenali (2018) argue that contextualization is evident in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, where language varies between identical stories to better suit the audience the authors were addressing. Mark uses redundant language to speak to lower educated individuals, while Matthew wrote with eloquent simplicity that would communicate well to higher educated people. The differences of education in one society necessitated different presentations of the same miraculous stories to communicate more effectively to different audiences.

Many modern churches practice contextualization in teaching to different age groups. This practice in American churches became widespread in the 19th century, and still occurs through modern day (Leal, 2018). Sunday school classes are split up between children, teenagers, and adults where the same lessons are taught in a variety of methods to best suit the age and development of the group. The need for contextualization was present in biblical times and is still present in a variety of contexts in modern day, including across cultures.

Just as the truth of the Bible should not be compromised in contextualization, not all cultural practices are healthy and should be combined with Christianity. The lack of separation of Christ as the one way to salvation and cultural mystic activities has led to religious misunderstandings and pluralism (Van Engen, 1996). Cultural practices with pagan roots should not always be redeemed for Christ but discarded to stand in biblical truth. Believers must use discernment when implementing contextualization and observing cultural rituals and norms. When done properly, contextualization represents the ministry of Jesus and furthers His

Kingdom as the true global, multi-generational church that it is, placing the non-cultural truth of Christ in any cultural group around the world.

Forms of Communication

Contextualization can be demonstrated through various modes of communication. There are a wide variety of ways to communicate effectively, with many of the styles overlapping or collaborating to create another form of communication. Each individual way should be used according to its appropriate context, including finding the most effective form of communication for varying cultures.

Story

One important form of communication is story. In Western contexts, it is often thought of as childish, as seen by the example of childhood Bible stories in American children's church that eventually fade away to exegetical sermons and intense Bible studies in adult services. All of these sermon styles have their importance, but one cannot disregard story as an immature form of communication. In a wide variety of cultures, information and history is passed down through generations by stories. Written historical records are not common, which often presents unique difficulties in preserving cultural heritage. These are commonly known as oral cultures, including Alaskan native, Asian, African tribal, Middle Eastern, and Hebrew culture in biblical times. Oral cultures hold an estimated 5 billion people, over two-thirds of the world population (Austin, 2016). Studies show that facts are twenty times easier to remember when placed in a story and that story engages visual, audio, and kinesthetic learners (Boris, 2017). To disregard

stories as adult communication would be to disregard a successful way to share the Gospel truth to billions of people.

Dance

Dance is a form of communication that has been used in cultures around the world for centuries but has been discounted as common in modern western church movements and missions. In the early 1900s in America, dance was often associated with Pentecostal style holiness camp meetings, where “exuberant worship” led to falling out in the Spirit, laughter, “dancing in the Spirit”, and other fantastical spiritual displays of physical emotion (Smith, 2014, p. 108). Dance became an anathema in the majority of American churches, with many denominations including doctrine that forbade such activities (Smith, 2014). The anathema of dance during this time aligns with the Native American cultural and dance bans that occurred from 1900-1933 (Treglia, 2013). In the later 20th century, there was a slight renewal of dance for positive religious displays, but it is still uncommon and even frowned upon. Other cultures throughout early history have used dance as a form of communication for religious and non-religious purposes. Native Americans often use dance for religious purposes, such as the hoop dance for private healing and spiritual ceremonies (Johnston et al., 2009). Though such practices are not as common today, they are still used in cultural heritage performances and gatherings. Specifically for Native American and Alaskan communities, disregarding dance for spiritual communication and performance is another missed opportunity for contextualization of Gospel truth in Native communities.

Theatre

Throughout 20th century America, drama was used in church services and for religious communication purposes. After decades of banning its members from attending theatrical productions, the Methodist church then endorsed drama through “The Wayfarer,” a production written in 1919 by Reverend James E. Crowther (Smith, 2014). In the years to follow, Christian churches in America rediscovered the use of theatre a form of communicating spiritual ideas. A number of denominations have since provided resources for members to participate and create theatre productions to communicate Gospel truths (Smith, 2014). Theatrical productions in religious services and for communication has continued to be utilized to this day, including in Christmas and Easter productions throughout many Western Christian churches (Smith, 2014). Theatre is often combined with story for a dramatic retelling of instrumental Bible stories and modern allegories for foundational truths. Theatre as a form of contextualized communication has been widely used throughout the West and shows how visual communication and art are successful forms of sharing the truths of Christ.

Art

Art is a very broad category, including performances, literature, music, theatre, two-dimensional visual art, three-dimensional visual art, installation pieces, architecture, and countless other varieties. Each of these provides a unique artistic value to society and cultural communication, though this paper will focus on two-dimensional and three-dimensional visual art categories including painting, ceramics, drawing, sculpture, and similar art mediums. Visual art engages different aspects of the human brain than other art categories.

Visual art is globally recognized across all of history. Artistic expression and visual representations are valued universally around the world, leading art to be one of the “most easily internationalized cultural products” (Goncalves, 2016, p. 4). Trade routes such as the Silk Road and slave and gold trade routes lead to easy exportation of cultural ideas and visual expression (Goncalves, 2016). It often surpasses “verbal expression and comprehension” and crosses language barriers (Goncalves, 2016, p. 4). Art may be considered a “universal language” understood by many across cultures first based on emotions and aesthetic content, with intellectual understanding following (Goncalves, 2016, p. 4). Comprehension of artistic expression frequently requires follow-up explanations, as knowledge and ideas are not always immediately understandable (Goncalves, 2016).

Goncalves (2016) notes that art is one of five internationalized human activities; others include science, sport, religion, education, and economics. Styles of these activities highly vary based on cultural norms and geographical location, but the root commonality of the activity is the same regardless of the society. Both developing and highly advanced cultures use these human activities in some form, and one should take advantage of these common activities as an opportunity to communicate cross-culturally, especially to communicate the most important universal truth: the Gospel.

Religion is also an internationalized activity, with a variety of monotheistic, polytheistic, and alternative flavors spanning the globe. Religious beliefs and a Greater Being has been explored since the beginning of humanity. Buddhism dates back 2,500 years, Islam originated in 600 CE, and Shinto was established in 700 CE, to list a few examples (Vaughan, n.d.). This secular evidence furthers what is stated in God’s Word, that eternity is written in human hearts

and that humanity has a longing for a Higher Power (*English Standard Version*, 2011/2016, Ecc. 3:11). Human spirituality and appreciation of aesthetics have been combined through history to create religiously motivated artworks that are often successful forms of communication. Combining one culture's artistic expression and unique mediums with biblical Christianity centers the common understanding of human spirituality on the truth of the Gospel and contextualizes the truth that Jesus' saving grace belongs in every culture across the world. Christian beliefs and cultural aesthetic value can always be combined, furthering the proper representation of the God of the universe and the saving power of Jesus Christ for all people groups and cultures.

Henna Stories is a creative ministry that uses henna story designs to share the Gospel to African, Asian, and Middle Eastern peoples where henna tattoos are a common practice. Using symbolism in designs, the creators of Henna Stories have opened opportunities to share Bible truths and stories in cultural art. Henna Stories ministry offers designs such as "Creation to Forgiving Father," "Pray for Mercy," "Bleeding Woman's Story," and "Mary and Martha" (Henna Stories, n.d.). The Henna Bible is an example of contextualization of the Gospel using art. In Native Alaskan and American contexts, both story and art are highly regarded as forms of communication. Beliefs are passed down to younger generations through story. Cultural heritage is continued through artworks such as beaded clothing and jewelry. Unique beading techniques and designs share cultural values and family history. While some cultural practices are antibiblical and should be discarded to stand in biblical truth, many practices can be redeemed for Christ and used for His Kingdom. To be Christian is not to be Western or American, but it is to be a follower of Christ. There is no culturally right way to do that. Native beadwork and story

open an opportunity for a unique collaboration between Gospel story and beading practices to share biblical truths in a creative context to Native Alaskans. Linking cultural practices and an effective form of communication contextualizes the global truth of Christ to these peoples. It shows how the Gospel is for all people and can fit in any culture.

Beading and Native Culture

Beadwork materials and practices have evolved over its history in Native American and Alaskan culture. Ancient materials include porcupine quills, hide, and clay that were indigenous to North America (Racette, 2017). Beads were created out of bones and other materials. Dyed porcupine quills were used to decorate clothing, bags, moccasins, and other items. Techniques include sewn applique, wrapping, and loom work. Quillwork became popular beyond the natural habitat of the porcupine and trade routes developed to expand distribution of materials. Due to popularity and European encroachment, porcupines became scarce. Quillwork is time consuming and curved designs are difficult (Frankel, 2018). With the rise of European trade in North America, other materials like glass beads and wool were introduced. Beads soon replaced porcupine quills in Native artwork. Glass beads were only available through trade, but were highly accessible, came in a wide variety of colors, and did not require special preparation. Beads can be worked in curved and raised techniques. Original quillwork techniques are now commonly used methods of beadwork, including applique and loom beading. European influence brought new stylization in designs, but Native traditions and decoration remained (Frankel, 2018). Materials changed, but beliefs about beadwork did not (Racette, 2017).

Cultural heritage of Native Alaskans and Americans became increasingly important after the colonization of the Americas. Governmental policies such as the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and Cultural Ban Act caused displacement of Native peoples from their original lands (Hemenway, 2017). Other government policies discouraged the use of Native languages that furthered the loss of identity and culture. These policies were enacted and then removed decades, even centuries ago, but many of their negative effectives are still seen in catastrophic effects today. Native Alaskans and Americans have increasingly high rates of depression, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and rape compared to other ethnic groups in the United States (Futures Without Violence, n.d.). Two important facts have risen out of those outcomes: cultural heritage is highly regarded and the need for the saving Gospel is necessary. A creative collaboration between story, Native artwork, and biblical truth opens an opportunity to value Native heritage and share Jesus to these peoples.

Symbolism and narrative in Native beaded artwork are common and further the value of cultural heritage and belief in Native communities. Designs, colors, and symbolism vary highly by tribe and region. Tribal context of Native American and Alaskan communities contributes to a unique variety of cultural standards and themes, though many share commonality of lifestyles and values that it is considered one broad group. The importance of beadwork as a cultural practice and a heritage to be passed to generations shows in the intricacy of each piece. Native artists do not take beadwork lightly. Countless renowned native art pieces are representative and feature story in the artwork with the intention of maintaining culture through the art style and beliefs represented.

Native artists

As mentioned previously, artist Emil Her Many Horses created a 3-D beadwork and doll-making piece to communicate Native American sacrifice and service in the Vietnam War. Her Many Horses' artwork was displayed in the American Indian Museum's permanent collection and won 'Best in Show' at the Northern Plains Tribal Art Show. Her Many Horses demonstrates how Native artists combine modern ideals with traditional techniques as a way of visual expression and maintaining cultural heritage (Edwards, 2006).

Renowned bead artist Joyce Growing Thunder Fogarty was commissioned to create a beaded piece for the "Identity by Design" exhibition at the National Museum of the American Indian in 2007 (Blumberg, 2007). Fogarty worked daily for ten months to create the ornate dress, complete with a cape and boots. The artist added beaded designs styled after her grandfather's traditional "giveaway ceremony." The grandfather would release a horse wearing a feather headpiece to the community as an act of generosity. Fogarty's dress features multiple horses wearing headdresses in remembrance of her heritage and the ceremony.

Women of Oneida and Haudenosaunee tribes in Wisconsin still create beadwork pieces of heritage resemblance. The pieces increasingly feature narrative and culturally specific symbols. Loretta Webster beaded a bag with a local religious myth known as "the turtle clan creation story" (Gordon, 2018). The work is intricate and highly skilled artistry. Webster's specific piece demonstrates an example of how narrative beadwork is a cultural practice that can be beautifully redeemed for the Kingdom of God. Creating a similar piece that shares the biblical creation story would communicate truth while recognizing cultural heritage and artistry (Gordon, 2018).

Gospel Designed Beadwork

Using Native style design, symbols, and colors to create a beadwork piece that demonstrates the Gospel allows for a unique opportunity to use a culturally valued art form to contextualize biblical truths to Native peoples. This piece is a beadwork applique, common among Native Alaskan design. Beaded applique can be sewn onto dresses, moccasins, jackets, purses, mittens, keychains, and countless other objects. While there is a variety of difficulty of beadwork applique, beaded embroidery methods do not require advanced skill level to begin. Beadwork applique does not require expensive or expansive materials, allowing this piece to be easily replicable in a classroom or personal setting.

Conclusion

Contextualization is an important part of successful Christian ministry, specifically cross culturally. Proper contextualization only places the Gospel in the right context and does not damage the truth of the message. Art and story are valuable means of communication that can be used to share the Gospel, specifically in Native American and Alaskan cultures. As beadwork is highly valued cultural art form in Native contexts, using a beadwork piece in Native stylization to explain the Gospel is an example of art as contextualization that can be used to share biblical truths to Native American and Alaskans.

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**An Instructional Guide for Native Alaskan
and American Style Beadwork Applique
Explaining the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

This beadwork applique draws on symbolism from a variety of Native Alaskan and American communities to contextualize the Gospel through a unique cultural art form. Symbols and color meanings are taken from several tribes across North America.

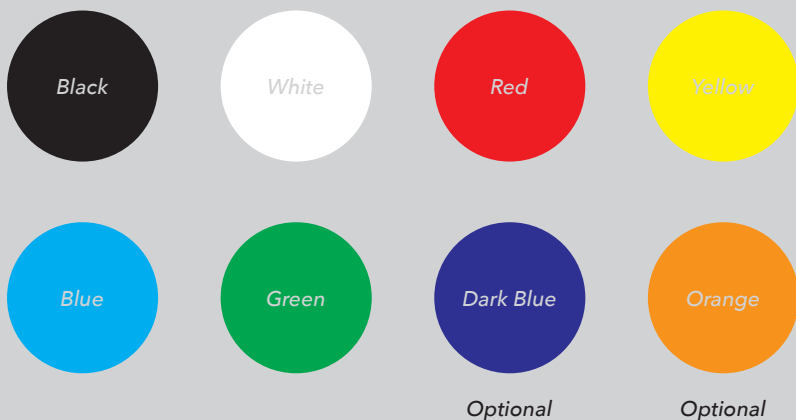
Created by Hali Gehring

1

Gather Supplies

- seed beads (*size 10/0 or smaller preferably*)
- beading needles (*size 11*)
- beading thread (*size 0 or 00*)
- beeswax
- backing material (*stiffened felt, duck canvas, etc.*)
- pencil
- paper
- scissors
- printed template to size (*4 in*)

Seed Bead Colors

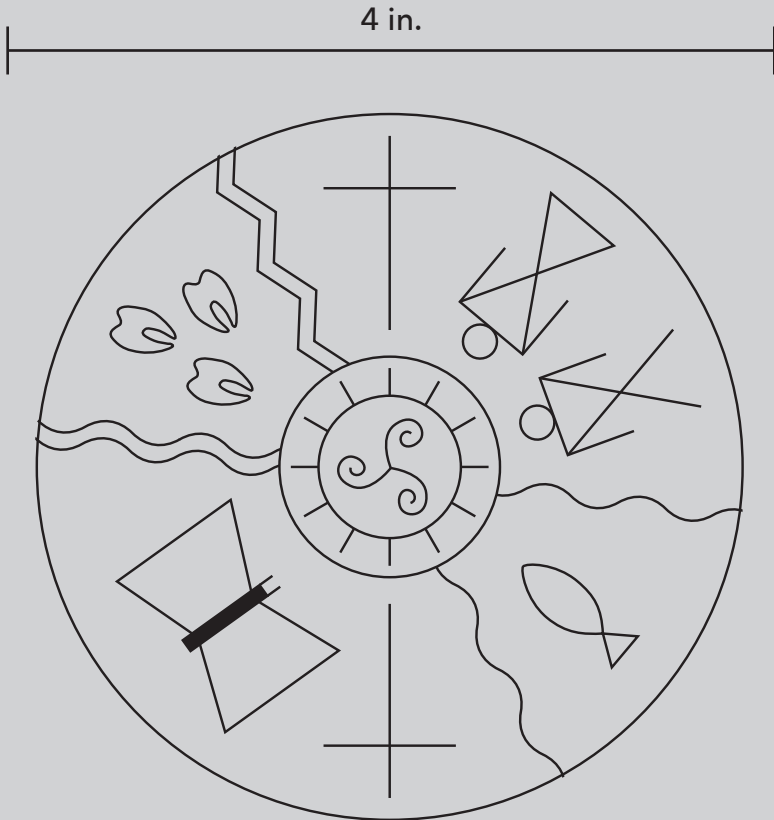


2

Cut the backing material to size and trace the design onto the material.

The recommended backing size for a 4 inch beaded piece is a 4.5-5 inch square.

Concentric circles often represent the cosmos and spiritual connection in Native American and Alaskan designs. This circle beaded piece tells the story of the Gospel, the true spiritual matters.



3

Bead white cross at top.

In Native belief, crosses often represent origins and white represents

In the beginning, there was only God. Then the one true God created the heavens, the earth, and everything in them - including us. The origin of everything is God. The cross was shifted to a cross similar to one that the God of the Bible's Son, Jesus, was crucified on.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"

Genesis 1:26

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

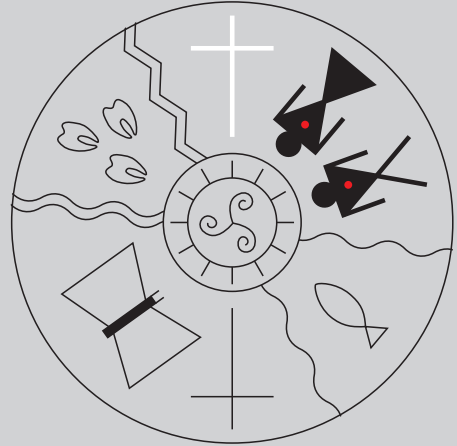
John 1:1



4

Bead two upside down people with black beads and one red bead in the center of the chest.

These stick figures use Native inspiration in style. Having the people upside usually indicates they are dead. Red often represents blood.



The first two people, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God and sinned. Their disobedience put a curse on the rest of humanity, including pain, suffering, sadness, and death. But first, Adam and Eve experienced a spiritual death. Adam and Eve still longed to be with God, but their sin nature now marred them and a blood sacrifice was required to right their wrongs.

“Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.’ Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’”

Genesis 3:11-13

“Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”

Hebrews 9:22

5

Bead the black zigzag and squiggle line, as well as black circle outline.

First, the zigzag shapes represent power and black is used to represent death. Squiggle lines represent water. The black outline represents the part of creation that was impacted by death and sin.

The curse of sin now brought a power to death that did not exist at creation. All of the earth, animals, and future generations were impacted by sin. Work was now burdensome. Finding food and water to survive was hard.



*"Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life."
Genesis 3:17*

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 6:23*

6

Fill in the section between the black zigzag and squiggle line with green.

In Native belief, green often represents origin and growth.

This section of the piece represents the “Creation Story,” the origin of all human life and earth. From God and this basis, we all originated and grow. The generations after Adam and Eve are negatively impacted by sin and our marred roots led us to naturally want to rebel against our Creator. God has blessed us all with choice. We have the opportunity to grow towards Him and in Him.

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

Romans 5:12

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:1-3



7

Bead the fish symbol black and fill in the section between the two black squiggle lines blue.

Use two shades of blue to add decoration and style.

Again, black represents death and fish represents food. Blue represents water and the awareness that we are searching for a Higher Being.

With sin, food and life-giving nourishment is difficult to find. When food and water are found, it is only temporarily sustaining. Humans are constantly searching for something to satisfy their spiritual and physical hunger. Our spiritual

desire can only be fulfilled by God, and humans are separated from God because of sin. We lack the necessary sacrifice and righteousness to be in relationship with God.



“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4:13-14

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God.”

Isaiah 59:2

8

Bead the bottom cross and butterfly with red beads.

Outline the cross and butterfly with orange beads for decoration.



Again, red represents blood and important events. In Christianity, the cross represents Christ's death and resurrection. It is used to balance out the white cross on the top of the piece, with balance representing equilibrium in spiritual matters. The butterfly represents transformation.

In God's perfect grace, He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus was fully God and fully human, completely sinless. Jesus died on the cross for our sins, fulfilling the requirement for a perfect sacrifice forever. Jesus then rose from the grave, defeating death and sin entirely. We can accept Jesus as our Savior, the only perfect sacrifice, and then be reunited in relationship with God. Through the blood of Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection, we are transformed and made new creations in Christ.

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:9

9

Bead the white circle outline.

White represents purification and being made clean. Filling in the outlines completes the concentric circles of spiritual matters and represents where we are made clean.

Through Christ and our new relationship as a Child of God, we are made clean. We are not bound by sin. On this imperfect earth, we will continue to have sin struggles, but we have the hope of being renewed daily by Christ.

*"So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God."
Galatians 4:7*

*"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."
Romans 6:1-4*



10

Bead one blue squiggle, with two white squiggles on either side.

White continues to represent purification and being made clean. While blue represents water and awareness of spiritual matters. The squiggle lines also represent water.



With our relationship with Christ, we have found the Living Water that is truly sustaining and nourishing. We are continually made clean by Christ. This also shows the act of baptism, immersion in water that is the public proclamation of our faith in Jesus.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Matthew 3: 11

"And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:13-17

11

Fill in the area between the white and black squiggle lines yellow.

Yellow represents transformation.

Jesus' role in our lives is truly transformational. As believers, we have the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit changes us. Our words and actions look different than before we were saved by Christ. We are called to be set apart and pursue holiness, looking different than the rest of the world.



"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
2 Corinthians 5:17

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
Romans 12:2

12

Bead the zigzag red, thicker than the black one it lines up with.

Red shows blood, with the zigzag again representing power. The red zigzag is also reminiscent of the stripes of blood on Jesus' back from the torture he endured before and during His crucifixion.

Through His death and resurrection, the blood of Jesus Christ defeats the power of sin and the devil. It is more powerful and we have that power to resist temptation, works of evil, and rebelling against God through that blood.

:And which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

2 Timothy 1:10

"He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 25:8



13

Bead the deer footprints: one yellow, one white, one green.

Deer footprints show where we are headed. They also show peace and tranquility. There are three footprints here for the Trinity: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Green is because God is our origin; white represents that we are purified by Christ; yellow shows we are transformed by the Holy Spirit.



When we choose to follow God, He guides our path and our direction through the Holy Spirit. The ultimate direction is toward Him. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three Beings in One, with the same characteristics but unique roles in our lives.

*"In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."
Proverbs 3:6*

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
John 16:13-14

14

Fill in the area between the squiggle and zigzag lines blue.

Use an ombre effect from dark blue beads at the bottom to light blue beads at the top for further decoration.

Blue continues to show water and awareness of our need for a Higher Power. The dark blue fading out shows the darker areas of our life marred by sin fading out.



Our need for Christ, the Living Water, doesn't end when we are saved. It is a daily battle, one we can win with the power of the Holy Spirit. The closer we get to Christ, the more we are refined and made like Him.

"In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 1:6-7

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

Galatians 2:20

15

Bead the white swirled design in the center.

This swirled design represents a warrior coming home. White is used for the perfection of our warrior, Christ.

Someday, Christ will return to take us with Him to our eternal home. Jesus is our perfect warrior, the only one capable of paying for our sins and defeating death.



"So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

Hebrews 9:28

"Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Matthew 24:44

16

Bead the sun rays and center yellow.

The sun represents the beginning of a new day, with yellow being both the actual color of the sun and a representation of transformation.



Though we make mistakes, God's mercies are new every single morning. We are continually transformed by God.

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning."
Lamentations 3:23-25

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."
Hebrews 4:16

17

Fill in the outline around the sun with white beads.

This section completes the piece and symbolizes continued purification.

When Christ returns, we will be fully purified and restored to how we were originally designed - sinless and unhindered to fully pursue God. We will spend eternity with our Creator, in the perfect relationship with Him we were intended to have.

"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."

John 10:28

"He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."

Ecclesiastes 3:11



Ways to Use Your Beaded Applique

- sew it onto a jacket, purse, wallet, slippers, gloves, hat, backpack or other clothing item
- attach a stiff backing and key hook to make a keychain
- use it as a wall decoration

Next Steps to Know Christ

- Pray to God that you would like to accept Jesus as your Savior.

Here is a common prayer to help, known as the Sinner's Prayer:

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You have I sinned and done what's evil in Your sight, so that You're proved right when You speak and justified when You judge. Surely I've been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I'll be clean, wash me, and I'll be whiter than snow. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will turn back to You. Amen."

- Tell someone! Reach out to a fellow Christian - a church member, family member, friend, neighbor.

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