

SESSION THREE: TALKING CIRCLE GUIDELINES

Essential features of a Talking Circle:

1. Plan the circle together, with a fun activity afterwards.
2. Select a time that’s convenient for all.
3. Create an “agenda” for topics to be addressed.
4. Choose a facilitator each week.
5. Elect a note taker each week.
6. Establish talking circle guidelines for your family.

Common guidelines of a Talking Circle are:

- Every person has an opportunity to speak.
- It is your turn to speak when you are holding the special symbol.
- Others must listen to speaker holding the symbol.
- Each person has the right to be respected.
- Everyone may share his or her thoughts and feelings about each topic.
- Family decisions are made by consensus, *except* some decisions are reserved for parents.
- Use one, some, or all of the four sacred plants before and/or after each talking circle.

Other Rules for Your Family:



SESSION THREE: THE TRADITIONAL ANISHINABE FAMILY



A long time ago, our family's goal was to live by Minobimaadziwin, the good way of life. We followed many family rituals that promoted harmony and balance within our families and the world around us. Our families not only included our moms, dads, and the aabinoojii (the child) but also our grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other extended relatives. We all lived closely and formed a strong bond with each other.

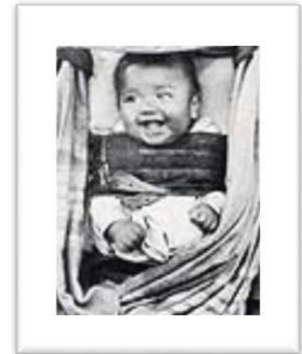
From the time of conception of the aabinoojii, the entire family was affected. The female relatives helped the mother prepare for the birth and the life of her child, and the male relatives helped the father prepare. It was also

believed that when the mother is pregnant, so is the father. Therefore, the father was to conduct himself as if he were carrying a child.

The aabinoojii is believed to be a gift or a loan from the creator and therefore should be treated with much love and respect. We are all gifts of the creator, Gizhe Manido. From the time of conception, the aabinoojii has a spirit and begins to learn from its parents and the people around him/her. If the aabinoojii is surrounded by love, the baby will be born happy and full of love for those around him/her.

The baby was always surrounded by family members. Even in the summer, while picking strawberries, chokecherries, gooseberries, and other types of berries; and in the fall when harvesting corn, squash, and pumpkin beans. The baby was always close by watching his/her family.

As aabinoojii got older, the boys would go with their father, uncles, and grandfathers; hunting, trapping, and fishing. Girls would always be with mother, aunties, and grandmothers; cooking, taking care of the young children, and taking care of the camp. This was how boys and girls learned their roles as men and women.



As they became adolescents, before their bodies started to change, the boys and girls would go through rituals to signify that they soon would be men and women. A young boy would go on a vision quest and when he had his first kill, usually of a deer, a feast was held in his honor. The meat from his first kill would be given to elders and other significant people in his life. This taught him the value of giving. A girl would also go through a ritual at the time of her "first moon." This would signify that she was now a woman. (The young woman did not have to go on a vision quest because it was believed that understanding of her being came naturally at the time of her first moon.)

The young boys and girls would eventually have families of their own and the cycle of life would continue. All of the rituals and traditions that the traditional Anishinabe family followed helped them live the Minobimaadziwin.

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SESSION THREE: SKILLS FOR LIVING

Name the values, skills, and qualities that you hope for your child to adopt. Include skills needed for survival and the values and qualities needed to live a good life or Minobimaadziwin.

Now please write down how you might teach your child these values, skills, and qualities. Write down as many ideas as you can come up with.



SESSION THREE TAKE HOME ACTIVITY

PRACTICE TALKING CIRCLE

Pick a simple topic for discussion and try to observe the guidelines we have discussed:

- Use the talking circle symbol your family has selected.
- Allow everyone to have an opportunity to speak.
- Everyone listens respectfully to the person with the talking circle symbol.
- If possible, reach consensus as a family on the topic.

When did you hold the Family Talking Circle? _____

Who participated in the Talking Circle? _____

