

Indigenous religions

Religion



The paper “ Nature of Indigenous Religions, the Most Important Features of Onondaga” is an intriguing variant of an assignment on religion and theology. Contrast a shaman to a priest and a minister A Shaman is an individual who is not a member of organized religion and communicates directly to the spirit world. Shamans acquire their powers individually through physical or mental circumstances and enjoy solitude and isolated lifestyles. A shaman has spiritual assistances that help them to perform ritual such as divining, bewitching and healing. Shamans can control supernatural powers. A shaman is a religious entrepreneur who communicates with the spirits on behalf of humans. He establishes the cause of misfortunes in society and performs acts such as curing and exorcism at a fee (Martin 12). On the other hand, a priest is a leader of organized religion. The name differs according to religion.

The priest safeguards the religious traditions and sacred law of the organized religion. Unlike shamans, priests are common in highly populous societies. They serve the purpose of performing religious rituals in order to influence the spiritual world. In addition, priests enable believers to live according to the sacred laws of the religion. They hold religious ranks and are ceremonially initiated into priesthood. A minister encourages people to follow a particular religion and believe in its tenets. Ministers belong to organized religion and they elaborate religious teachings to others. Ministers differ from priests in that, some initiation involved in their appointment. In addition, ministers depend on the contributions made by the members of their religion to cater to their needs (Shadle 4). The priest also differs from a shaman in the sense that a shaman belongs to a small community and communicates

<https://assignbuster.com/indigenous-religions/>

directly with the spiritual world.

2. What is the role of nature in indigenous religions?

The existence of indigenous religions depended on various occurrences in nature. The populace used natural occurrences to explain situations and calamities in society. Native Americans regarded nature as the mother of everything within the community. There were no official gatherings for worship and individuals observed various rituals in honor of nature. For example, the religion regarded cows as nature's gifts and it was an abomination to eat beef. In addition, various natural occurrences such as droughts, rain, floods, and diseases resulted from nature (Martin 10).

Indigenous people would determine the mood of the spiritual world through natural occurrences. For example, during rainy seasons and abundant harvests, the people believed that the supernatural powers were happy with their conduct and morals. On the other hand, occurrences such as droughts and flood resulted from the spirits' anger attributed to an individual's misconduct in society. Nature enabled people to observe the morals and norms of society in order to avoid calamities like droughts and floods. Generally, nature was the center of the indigenous religion since it was useful in explaining the cause of various occurrences and calamities in society (Martin 5).

3. Adolescent initiation rites

The adolescent is a critical stage in human development. Many biological and physical changes take place in an individual's body. In indigenous societies, there was a formal rite of passage for all members of the

<https://assignbuster.com/indigenous-religions/>

community. The most common was the initiation of the girl or boy into adulthood during adolescence. Apache initiation rites took place during the first menstrual cycle in girls. The rite was held in honor of the female goddesses. It was mandatory for the girls in a community to undergo the rite of passage after they experienced their first menstruation. The process entailed singing and dancing in honor of the new entrants into womanhood. The praises and celebrations honored the female goddess for blessing the community with a woman. The current rites are different from the apache rites in that, most of the members of the society are unaware of a girls' first menstruation. In addition, the current rites are not official and are accompanied by minimal singing and dancing. This implies that rites of passage among adolescents need not be official to be important. Individuals celebrate during various initiation rites such as weddings and graduation. However, minimal attention is directed at the ritual and it involves few individuals in society. Adolescence is a common development stage and only a few people celebrate such occurrences through birth parties. The apache initiation rites were, however, important to the community since they involved honoring the women goddesses (Rangel 250).

Native American experience

Religion is a crucial part of every society and serves as a guide to other practices in the Native American Society. I would first observe all the religious activities such as the offering of sacrifices. I would also participate in other activities in society such as gathering fruits, hunting, and initiation rites. In terms of belief, I would use natural occurrences to interpret the events in the community. A blue sky would mean humbleness and calmness

<https://assignbuster.com/indigenous-religions/>

in the spiritual world. In addition, weather calamities such as storms, droughts, and floods would imply a bad connection between the gods and the members of the community. This implies that the gods are punishing the community. On the other hand, normal rains, abundant harvest, and availability of animals to hunt are an indication of the gods' blessings (Martin 8).

5. Describe what is of most importance to an Onondaga. Why do you think this is the case?

The Onondaga is a Native American society with a sovereign government and leadership. The nation observes various events and activities in honor of God's blessings to them. The people of Onondaga value their culture and practices. This is because; their culture encompasses their beliefs, traditions, leadership, rituals, and religion. They adore their ceremonies, which involves honoring Mother Nature for providing them with abundant blessing. In addition, the people value the elders in their society and give them the responsibility to maintain a high moral carcass of the culture. The community's chiefs are mainly elders in society. Moreover, the clan's mothers organize ceremonies in the community in addition to contributing to the overall governance of the nation (Onondaga Nation: People of the Hills).