



SEVEN SACRED GIFTS

The Creator has gifted us everything we need to exist. At the Indian Community School, we focus on the following seven Sacred Gifts¹ as guiding our ways of life: Respect, Humility, Truth, Love, Honesty, Bravery and Wisdom. For us, these Sacred Gifts are traced to Ojibwe ways and many other nations have adopted a similar way of interacting with creation and each other.

There is tremendous depth to understanding these gifts. This understanding includes intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual experiences. As we learn about each of these gifts and as we use them collectively in our day-to-day and moment-to-moment lives, we build a deeper knowledge.

To assist your personal journey and growth, we offer the following to facilitate a common understanding.

Show Respect *"To honor all of creation is to have respect."*¹

Gišak waha re ᐃᓄᓐ Menācheaw ᐃᓄᓐ Ezhi-manaadendam ᐃᓄᓐ Kalihwakwenyastá:tsla?

Honoring ourselves. Honoring each other. Honoring all of creation: earth, water, air, plants, animals & greater forces. Honoring each others teachings. Acknowledging the sacredness in each other. Showing appreciation in all things; external, internal and spiritual. Expressing gratitude for everything provided. Seeking peace by acting with care and concern. Treating others as an equal part of creation. Respect cannot be demanded. Giving respect earns respect. Seeking to understand before seeking to be understood.

Be Humble *To accept yourself as a sacred part of creation is to know humility.*

Kuži hakjnjnjne ᐃᓄᓐ Pakāhesew ᐃᓄᓐ Ezhi-dabasendam ᐃᓄᓐ Yawelyahsi: yú

Recognizing that we are not above anything else, and rely on other parts of creation to survive. Continually seeking balance within ourselves by being centered, and seeking harmony among all parts of creation. Being selfless. Acknowledging all of creation in personal struggles and successes. Acting and thinking in a way that recognizes the importance of self, while acknowledging the equality of all creation. Abiding by the advice of: Don't think less of myself. Think of myself less.

Be Truthful *To have trust in the Creator is to know truth.*

Waža hisgexji ᐃᓄᓐ Onāmow ᐃᓄᓐ Ezhi-debwe ᐃᓄᓐ akato:kāne?

The creator made all things with purpose and all are interrelated and dependent on one another. The truth has been given to us within our hearts, in our stories, ceremonies, and traditions, in the natural order of the universe and all living things. It is our responsibility to seek the truth to live in harmony with creation. Coming to understand that we, as humankind, are a very important yet very small part of creation. Coming to know who we are, and what your personal gifts are.

Show Love *To know love is to know peace and harmony.*

Wogixete hakinjine ᐃᓄᓐ Tapānetowak ᐃᓄᓐ Ezhi-zaagi'ige ᐃᓄᓐ Kanolukhwáhsla?

Honoring and valuing ourselves, our family, others, all of creation. Forming affectionate ties with devotion, admiration, tenderness, unselfish loyalty and benevolent concern. Seeking to be connected with all of creation in a generous and cooperative manner. Love of all life is given freely. Love is a positive, selfless expression of affirmation, action, and acknowledgment toward all creation.

Be Honest *To walk through life with integrity is to know honesty.*

Kere t'ukenjine • Pemēhtaw ᐃᓄᓐ Ezhi-gwayakowaadizi ᐃᓄᓐ Aetwalihwakwalihsyúhake?

Being sincere in action, character, and word. Living a life applying the teachings from the seven Sacred Gifts. Sincerely being ourselves, and not trying to be someone else. Being straightforward and factual while communicating. Living authentically provides a foundation for caring and good-hearted relationships and keeps life from being complicated. Living a life fulfilling your roles and responsibilities.

Be Brave *To face life with courage is to know bravery.*

Wašoše hakinjine ᐃᓄᓐ Meskosēwan ᐃᓄᓐ Ezhi-zoongide'e ᐃᓄᓐ Ka?nikuhkatstátsla?

Demonstrating personal strength to face difficulties. Making positive choices. Having conviction. Facing your inner fears to fully live your gifts. Being willing to take on challenges or risks to better oneself or others. Holding firm in your thoughts and standing strong even though you don't know how it will turn out right now. Being prepared to defend your beliefs, your family and your community in good ways seeking peaceful resolutions.

Be Wise *"To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom."*¹

Wapakanank ji jere ᐃᓄᓐ Nepūāhkan ᐃᓄᓐ Ezhi-nibwaakaa ᐃᓄᓐ Ayukwalihowanahtúhake

Continually seeking and applying knowledge. Seeking the ability to discern using prayer and sound judgment. Listening with clarity and a sound mind. Seeking and following the advice of those before you. Seeing inner as well as outer qualities. Through a lifelong journey, maintaining curious excitement and a positive attitude. Developing, sharing and using your gifts. Wisdom is learning from past and present experiences and applying or sharing that learning to better oneself and others.

References

1. Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*, (Hayward, Indian Country Communications, 1988), 64.

