



LESSON ONE

NAVAJO NATION

A Pre-school Lesson Plan

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Lesson Plan: Meeting the Navajo Nation with the Navajo Puppy Song

Grade Level: Preschool (Ages 3-5)

Subject: Social Studies/Cultural Awareness

Duration: 30 minutes

Lesson Topic: Learning About Navajo Homes, Families, and a Special Song



Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, preschoolers will:

1. Recognize the Navajo Nation as a community of people who live in a special place in the United States.
2. Understand that Navajo families live in homes called hogans and sing songs to their little ones.
3. Join in singing the "Navajo Puppy Song" to feel a part of Navajo family life.

Cultural Considerations

- Focus on everyday Navajo life (homes, family songs) to keep it real and relatable.
- Avoid stereotypes like feathers or war paint; emphasize living culture, not just historical images.
- Use the "Navajo Puppy Song" respectfully as a lullaby shared by Navajo families, not as a gimmick.

Materials Needed

- Simple map of the United States with the Navajo Nation area (Arizona, New Mexico, Utah) circled.
- Picture of a Navajo hogan (printed or on a screen).
- Recording or lyrics of the "Navajo Puppy Song" (e.g., a simple version like “Shítéí, shítéí, shítéí, my little puppy, go to sleep” in Navajo or English, sourced from a reputable Navajo cultural resource if possible).
- Small stuffed puppy toy or puppy picture for each child (to hold during the song).
- Blanket or mat for a cozy “hogan” circle time.

Optional: Photo of Navajo fry bread or a woven rug (to show family activities).

Lesson Procedure

1. Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)

Purpose: Set a warm tone and introduce the Navajo Nation.

- Activity: “Where Families Live”
 - o Gather the children on a blanket or mat in a circle, like a cozy hogan. Say, “Today, we’re visiting a special family—the Navajo people. They live far away in a big, sandy place.”
 - o Show the map and point to the Southwest. “This is where the Navajo Nation is. It’s their home, like our town is our home.”
 - o Add, “The Navajo have families just like us, with grandmas, moms, dads, and kids. Let’s learn about them!”

2. Main Activity: Homes and the Navajo Puppy Song (15 minutes)

Purpose: Share Navajo life and connect through song.

Talking About Hogans:

- o Show a picture of a hogan. “This is a hogan—a Navajo home. It’s round and made from wood and the earth. It’s where families live and tell stories or sing songs.”
- o Ask, “Does your house look like this? What’s different?” (Let them share simple ideas like “My house is square!”).

Introducing the Song:

- o Say, “Navajo moms and dads sing a special song to their little ones to help them sleep. It’s called the ‘Navajo Puppy Song.’ It’s about a puppy who’s cozy and sleepy.”
- o Give each child a stuffed puppy or puppy picture to hold. “Let’s pretend we’re in a hogan with our puppies, ready for a lullaby.”

Singing the Navajo Puppy Song:

- o Sing a simple version of the song of portions of the song that are easier for the children to pronounce (e.g., “Weii-yee-naa,” “Shítéí, shítéí,”). Keep it short and repetitive for preschoolers.

- o Sing it twice—first, model it slowly, then invite the kids to join in while rocking their puppies gently.
- o Say, “This song is soft and quiet, just like how Navajo families care for their kids.”

3. Hands-On Connection: Puppy Nap Time (5-7 minutes)

Purpose: Reinforce the song with a calm activity.

- Activity: “Puppy Rest in the Hogan”
 - o Spread the blanket out like a hogan floor. “Let’s make our hogan cozy. Bring your puppy and lie down or sit quietly.”
 - o Hum the "Navajo Puppy Song" softly while they rest with their puppies for a minute or two. (Keep it short to match their attention span.)
 - o Afterward, ask, “Did your puppy like the song? How did it feel?”

4. Closing Circle (3-5 minutes)

Purpose: Wrap up and reflect simply.

- Quick Talk:
 - o “Who did we learn about today?” (Navajo people)
 - o “Where do they live in their homes?” (Hogans)
 - o “What song did we sing?” (Navajo Puppy Song)
- Goodbye Words: “The Navajo are a big family who live in hogans and sing to their little ones, just like we sing to our friends or pets. They’re still here today, taking care of each other.”

Take-Home: Let the kids keep their puppy pictures (if used) to remember the song.

Assessment

- Observation: Notice if the children join in singing or rocking their puppies. See if they can say “Navajo” or “hogan” when asked.
 - Simple Check: Ask one or two kids, “What’s a Navajo home called?” or “What did we sing about?”
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Differentiation

- For Wiggly Learners: Let them stand and sway with their puppies instead of sitting still.
 - For Quiet Learners: Give extra smiles or a gentle pat to encourage them to sing along.
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Extensions

- Snack Time: Share a tiny piece of fry bread (if pre-made) and say, “Navajo families love making this together.”
 - Art: Draw a round hogan with crayons and add a puppy inside.
 - Movement: Pretend to be puppies waking up after the song—stretch and yawn!
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Teacher Notes

- I’ll keep this real by talking about Navajo life today—hogans, songs, and family—not old-timey stuff that makes it feel fake.
 - I’ll remind the kids, “The Navajo are still here, living their way, just like we live ours.” No costumes or silly props—just respect.
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Resources:

Simple Map - <https://dinelanduse.org/boundaries/>

Navajo Puppy Dance Song - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LS2F1qz7BSA>

Hogan Reference Photo -

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1290035381057288&id=992304270830402&set=a.993159037411592>

<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-united-states-arizona-navajo-nation-monument-valley-tribal-park-hogan-87298924.html>

https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/19576819?source_impression_id=p3_1741390595_P37GhuO9jNfrIGwn&modal=PHOTO_TOUR_SCROLLABLE
