

Southeastern Native American Tribes: Choctaw

Begin the lesson by telling students the myth *Grandmother Spider Steals the Fire*. Explain that it's a Choctaw creation myth. After you tell the myth, talk about the different characters in the myth and why they might have created this myth. Also, discuss how Grandmother Spider helped the Choctaws and how she did so.

Point out on the map that the Choctaws live in the southeast US. Discuss the daily lives of the Choctaws, such as housing, food, clothing, games and entertainment, and culture using the website.

Allow students to work on a worksheet about the Choctaws to put in their Native American book.

Discuss pottery with the students, and how the Choctaws use pottery in their everyday lives. Also discuss how the Choctaws use pottery today as a way of celebrating their cultural heritage. Show them the kinds of designs they put on their pottery. Remind the students how Grandmother Spider showed the Choctaws in the story how to create pottery when she gave them the gift of fire.

Give each student a worksheet. Explain the symbols and the assigned meaning of the colors.

Then allow the students to make pinch pots of self-hardening clay. Have them each carve one of the Choctaw designs into their pottery using sticks, and paint the pots using at least one of the sacred colors of the Choctaws. Then have students leave their pots to dry. In a few days, they will have a pinch pot like the Choctaw clay pots.

After doing the pottery, have the students draw a picture of their pot that they made, making sure they drew the Choctaw design and their chosen colors on their drawing of the pot. On the same sheet, have the students write a reflection telling why they chose that particular design and color. Have them relate what it meant to the Choctaw and what these designs and colors mean to them.