

# Ceremonial Hand Drums



## Overview

Native American music is not static, but is a living, evolving art form. Teach music from this culture not as "museum pieces," but rather as part of a centuries-long tradition. When preparing lessons that incorporate Native American music, teachers should keep in mind several important guidelines for maintaining respect and honor for this musical culture. Treat the music with respect. Point out similarities and differences in styles and forms as one would when comparing Western works of different periods, styles, and genres.

## Education Standards

### Fine Arts 5.1B

**Foundations: music literacy.** The student describes and analyzes musical sound. The student is expected to:

(B) distinguish among a variety of musical timbres, including those of woodwind, brass, string, percussion, keyboard, electronic instruments, and instruments of various cultures.

### Fine Arts 5.5C

**Historical and cultural relevance.** The student examines music in relation to history and cultures. The student is expected to:

(C) identify and describe music from diverse genres, styles, periods, and cultures.

## Materials Needed

Small-sized paper plates (2 per student)

Twine

Colorful feathers (2-3 per student)

Colorful small beads

Colorful craft sticks  
Hole puncher  
Stapler (optional)  
Teacher background handout

## Vocabulary

Timbres  
Percussion  
String instruments  
Woodwind instruments  
Tradition

## Student Objectives

Students will be introduced to the significance of the ceremonial hand drum in the Native American Culture.

Students will listen to traditional Native American songs and create a decorative ceremonial hand drum.

Students will be able to discuss the significance of the ceremonial hand drum in relation to the Native American traditions.

## Activity

1. Students will see pictures of the variety of drums that exist in the Native American culture and the traditional uses of each type; celebration, ceremonial, spiritual. (hand drums, water drums)
2. Students will listen to a variety of songs that focus on the sounds of Native American drums, and discuss the emotions they feel as they listen to the music.
3. Students will learn about the significance behind the drum in Native American culture and how the drum plays an important role in Native American Powwows.
4. Students will construct their own interpretation of a ceremonial hand drum using the materials provided.
5. Students will share the meaning behind their ceremonial hand drum with classmates.

## Extension

Research different Native American hieroglyphs/symbols and their meanings-decorate your drum to tell a story or lesson based on those images.

Form a group with peers and create music using the new instruments. Option to perform if time permits.

