

# NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

**3-5**

Subject

**Social Studies  
P.E.**

Lesson Title

**Native Dance Forms: Learn  
to do the Round Dance**

**Activity Description:** In this activity, students will identify the importance of music within a culture, and recognize the significance of dance in the Native culture. Students will compare three different dances, picking out their similarities and differences.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Wifi access (recommended)
- Watch the Youtube video ["Round Dance 101"](#)
- Optional Activity:
  - [Watch the Youtube video on The Nutracker](#)

## STEPS

This activity is for children to do with a person from the family or community, or by the children themselves.

### Discuss the Significance of Dance to the Choctaw People

1. Explain that dance is indeed used all over the world for many different purposes such as events, art, social, and ceremony.
2. Today, we will learn how to do the "Round Dance", a dance that is important to the culture of many Native American Tribes, such as the Mississippi Choctaw people.
3. Discuss that there are 3 types of dances in the Choctaw communities: social dances, animal dances, and war dances.
  - a. All of these dances reflect aspects of the Choctaw life, such as the "Wedding Dance", which celebrates marriages, and the "Friendship Dance" which recognizes close bonds within the tribe.
  - b. These dances express cooperation, meaning everyone comes together during a dance.

### Dance the Round Dance

1. Watch the [Youtube video "Round Dance 101"](#)
  - a. Go through the steps with you child one-by-one discussion the importance of each part of the dance as discussed in the video.
2. Once your child seems to have the steps down, put on the music and do the round dance together.

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## HELPFUL TIPS

**Parents and caregivers:** This is a wonderful opportunity for your child or student to learn more about the significance of various dances to Native American culture, specifically from the perspective of the Mississippi Choctaw people.

- After your child learns about the significance of dances to the Mississippi Choctaw people, ask them about dances that are important to them:
  - "What kind of dances have you experienced?"
  - "Where we see dance in our worlds?"
  - "How are these dances similar or different to the Round Dance?"

### Optional Activity

- Consider playing videos of another type of dance, such as this [video from The Nutcracker](#), to start a discussion with your child about how this type of dance might be similar or different to the round dance.
  - For instance, the Nutcracker ballet is rehearsed to be a performance and piece of art, and the round dance is meant to be social dance, where people gather to be together.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

**Families and Educators:** This activity may open up other talking points about dances from other Native American cultures, and how they might be similar or different to the dances that your child knows. Your child may even want to learn these dances.

- Consider [playing this video story of the healing dance from Ojibwe culture](#), and prompt a discussion with your child about whether this type of dance is a performance, social dance, or something else.

For more types of Native American dances, here are some suggestions below:

- [Visit the Blackhawk Museum](#) virtually to learn about other types of Native American dance ceremonies.
- [Explore the Legends of America website](#) to learn about other significant Native American dances.

### Activity Resource Links:

- Round Dance 101: What to Know Before Your First Round Dance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=626MhRI6aFQ&feature=youtu.be>
- Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy from the Nutcracker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV1qLYukTH8&feature=youtu.be>
- The Healing Dance: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDQtYt\\_n9vY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDQtYt_n9vY&feature=youtu.be)
- The Blackhawk Museum: Native American Dance Ceremonies: <https://blackhawkmuseum.org/nativedances/>
- Legends of America: Native American Dances: <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/na-dances/>