

Native American Zodiac

Your child may know his zodiac sign, but did he know he has a spirit animal as well? The Native American zodiac is different than the traditional one seen in your average newspaper horoscope. Help your child learn about Native American culture, and perhaps more about his own identity, by illustrating a Native American zodiac wheel.

What You Need:

- Internet access
- Large, white paper plate
- Pencil
- Colored pencils

What You Do:

1. Review the many types of zodiacs. The zodiac is made up of the 12 constellations that the sun passes over the course of a year. Some people believe that the constellation the sun was passing over at the time of your birth can predict certain personality traits about you. Reading horoscopes, predictions about the future based on your zodiac sign's personality traits, is a fun pastime that many people enjoy.
2. Explain to your child that the Native Americans had a different zodiac system. The version Native Americans used was also based on birth dates and star alignment, but in addition they included a study of the season in which one was born and assigned a "spirit animal" to birth dates. A spirit animal was supposed to accompany a person throughout their life and give them certain characteristics.
3. Search for a breakdown of a Native American zodiac online and review it with your child. Many of the animals in the zodiac hold special significance to Native American tribes. Talk a little bit about the animals: what parts of the country do the animals live in? Can he think of any Native American legends about any of the animals?
4. You may also want to compare and contrast the personality traits each zodiac predicts. For example, a person born on August 29th would be a Virgo on a regular zodiac, but a Bear on the Native American zodiac. How are the personality traits of a Virgo like the ones for a Bear? Are there any that are different? For an extra challenge, talk about the Chinese zodiac as well!
5. Have him use the back of a large white paper plate for a circular canvas. He can use a pencil to sketch each animal and note the birth dates.
6. When he has finished the sketch, he can find his own birth animal. On the other side of the plate, he can write his birth animal and characteristics.
7. Have him use colored pencils to color in his sketches, filling in more colorful details for the animals.
8. When he's done, he can read his friends' horoscopes using his new zodiac wheel!

