



NATIVE AMERICAN BRAIDING ACTIVITY

While specific practices and traditions vary across different tribes and nations, long hair and braiding are very important to many Indigenous communities in the Americas. Braids symbolize strength, wisdom and connection to ancestors. Today, braids are an important marker of identity for many Indigenous people, since not too long ago many indigenous people were forced to have their hair cut short.

For many Indigenous groups, braiding hair is a special activity. The 3 strands represent the mind, body, and spirit. These 3 things make up a whole person, and in many Indigenous practices health means taking care of all three. That is why it is important to have good thoughts when braiding hair.

Instructions:

1. Use the positive intention sheet included with this worksheet to brainstorm positive intentions. Have the kids think of things that make them happy. They can express themselves by drawing, using stickers, or writing things down.
2. After doing this, begin the braiding! It's best to use 3 different colors and a thicker material like yarn or fabric strips. Braiding also helps young children develop fine motor skills. For older kids, this can serve as a mindfulness/meditative activity.



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Sources: “The Cultural Importance of Hair,” TPT Originals YouTube, Dr. Anton Treuer
“The importance of long hair in Indigenous culture” - gold rush trail BC
<https://goldrushtrail.ca/stornies/the-importance-of-long-hair-in-indigenous-culture/>

POSITIVE INTENTIONS

In the clouds, write down some positive thoughts and ideas.



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