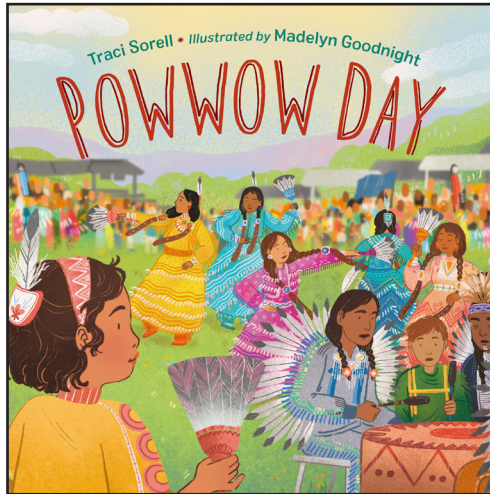


POWWOW DAY

ACTIVITY KIT

Table of Contents

Discussion Guide.....	2
What Is a Powwow?.....	3
My Helpers.....	4
The Healing Dance.....	5
Word Search.....	6



Traci Sorell
Illustrated by Madelyn Goodnight
978-1-58089-948-2 HC
e-book available

- ★ “A heartwarming picture book about the roles of courage, culture, and community in the journey of personal healing.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- ★ “A resonant, hopeful tale about the healing power of community and tradition.”
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

About the Book

It’s powwow day—but River can’t dance this year. Not like she could before she got sick.

This uplifting picture book by award-winning Cherokee author Traci Sorell follows River as she struggles with the isolation of a serious illness and the frustration of her physical limits—and as she finds solace in the healing power of community. Back matter explains the history and functions of powwows, which are held across the United States and Canada and are open to both Indigenous peoples and non-Native visitors.



About the Author

Traci Sorell is the author of award-winning books for children, including *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* and *We Are Still Here: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know*. She is an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation and lives in northeastern Oklahoma, where her tribe is located.



About the Illustrator

Madelyn Goodnight is a member of the Chickasaw Nation. Her work reflects her love of childhood. She holds a degree from Rhode Island School of Design and lives in Oklahoma. She is the illustrator of *The Pear Tree* and *Look, Grandma!/Ni, Elisi!*

POWOW DAY

Activity Kit

Discussion Guide

Use these questions to kickoff classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Powwows

1. What is a powwow? Have students ever attended one? If so, what was it like? If not, what do they think it would be like, based on the text and illustrations of *Powwow Day*? Have students attended other events that are like powwows? If so, in what ways are these events similar or different?
2. What are some of the dances River names in *Powwow Day*? Have students seen these dances performed? If so, when and where? Watch some footage of powwow competitions as a class and invite students to reflect: How are these dances like or unlike other dance styles that they're familiar with?
3. Besides sight, what are some other senses that Traci Sorell uses to describe the powwow? What sounds, smells, and textures does the narrator name?
4. What is Grand Entry? Why do dancers line up for Grand Entry from eldest to youngest?
5. Sometimes people learn a word in a way that's different from what it means. And sometimes a word has been taken from the culture it belongs to and used by people outside that culture. Have you ever heard the phrase "Let's have a powwow" to mean "let's have a discussion or meeting"? That's an example of language taken from Native people without their permission. Why is it important not to misuse words that don't belong to us?

Family & Community

1. Who are River's family members? How do they help and support her at the powwow?
2. How does River's friend Dawn help her? Can students think of times their friends have supported them through a difficult experience?
3. Open to pages 18–19 and read the prayer offered at the start of the powwow. What does this prayer tell you about the values of this community?

Healing & Feelings

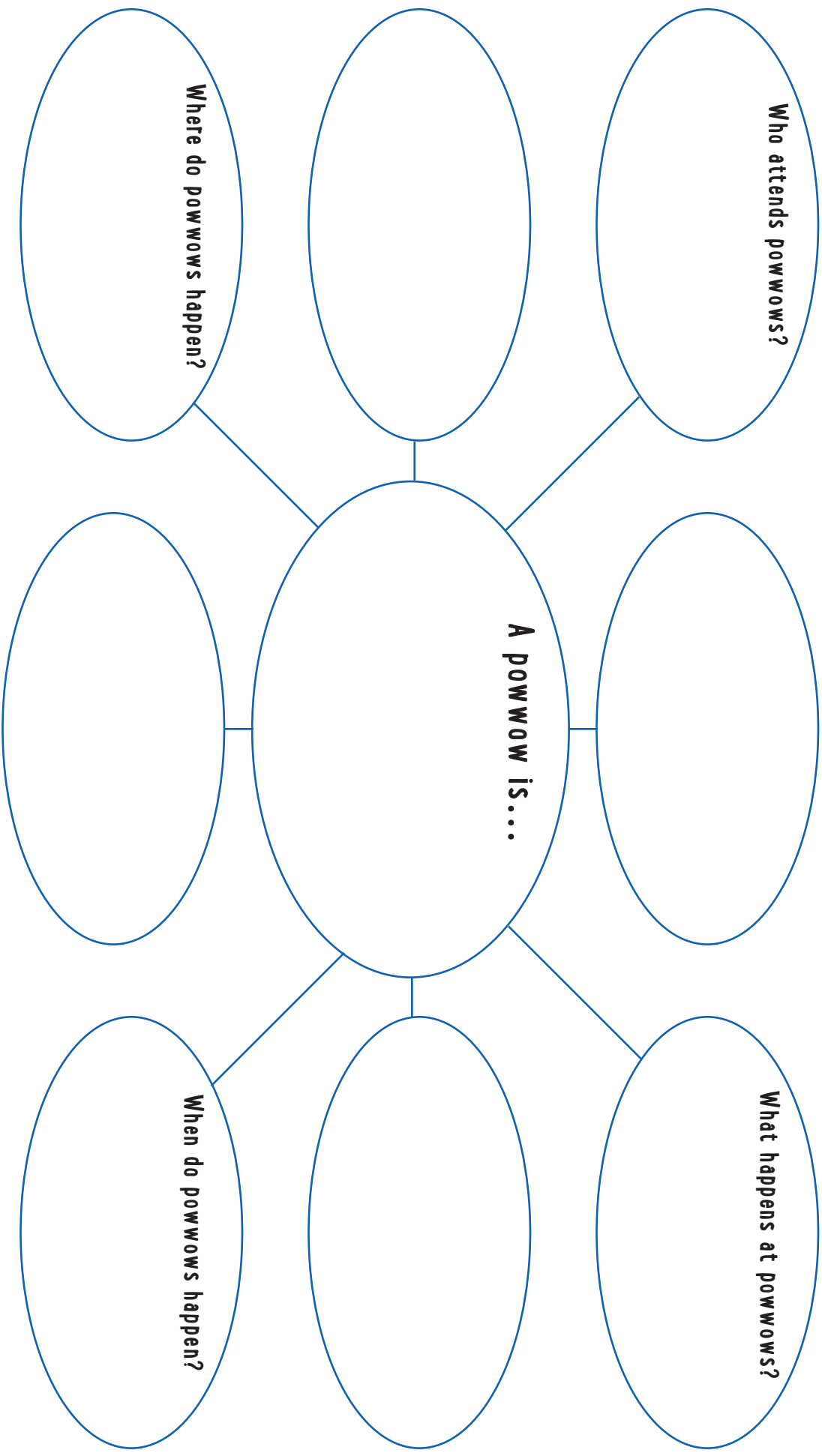
1. Why does River not feel well? What are some of her physical limitations in this story?
2. Besides lingering illness and fatigue, River is also struggling with big emotions. Can students name the feelings River is experiencing? How does River cope with these emotions?
3. Invite students to reflect on their own experiences with illness. What are some of the scary or frustrating things about being sick? Who helps to support them when they are sick or injured?

POWOW DAY

Activity Kit

What Is a Powwow?

Using what you already know or consulting research sources, fill out the knowledge map below!



POWOW DAY

Activity Kit

My Helpers

When River has trouble at the powwow, her friends and family help her in different ways. Who are your helpers? How do they help? (You can put the same helper in more than one bubble!)

When I'm lonely:

When I'm confused:

When I'm sick:

When I'm scared:

When I need help
doing something:

When I'm angry:

POWOW DAY

Activity Kit

The Healing Dance

In this guided research project, students learn the history of the jingle dress dance and its modern importance to Native communities.

Pre-discussion

1. Use question 2 under the “Powwows” section and questions 2 and 3 under the “Family & Community” section of the discussion guide on page 2 to get students thinking. What is the significance of the jingle dress dance in *Powwow Day*?
2. Invite students to write a list of questions they have about the jingle dress dance in their notebooks. Three to five specific questions is a good start.

Student Research

1. Offer students some dedicated library time to research the answers to their questions. Students should consult both digital and print resources. Ask students to evaluate their sources as they go: Are they reading material written by Native authors? Did they find their sources through tribal websites and archives? Can they confirm what they’re learning by checking it against other sources?
2. If students get stuck, encourage them to start with the sources listed in the back matter of *Powwow Day*. Students may also find the “Jingle Dress Dance” section in the back of the book useful either in directly answering their questions or in finding key words to use in their search.
3. Ask students to organize their findings on a poster or in a slideshow and present them to the class.
4. After hearing their peers’ presentations, ask students to reflect in their journals: What did they learn from their classmates? Do they have new questions after hearing these presentations? Where would they go to learn more about the jingle dress dance?

Further Lesson Resources

1. [“Learn to Dance like an Ojibwe Jingle Dancer”](#) by IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association.
2. [“Jingle Dancer: Educator Guide”](#) by Cynthia Leitich Smith.
3. [“Jingle Dress Teachings”](#) by Minneapolis Public Schools Indian Education.

POWWOW DAY

Word Search

Activity Kit

T A D R U M Q A I J
U R H E Y F N Z D N
J I N G L E I K A N
F M L A X P R F N H
A M P L S O R G C E
M K Z I T W O A E A
I U W A S W L V R L
L B E T W O D B S I
Y R F D A W G B T N
C E R E M O N Y H G

CEREMONY
DANCERS
DRUM

FAMILY
CREATOR
HEALING

JINGLE
POWWOW
REGALIA