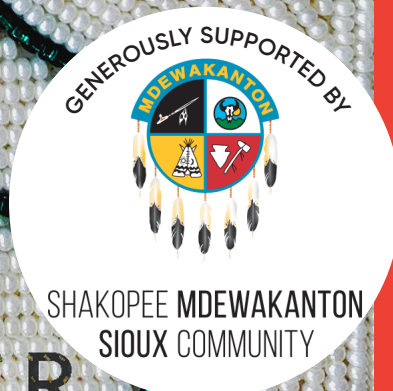


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YOU WANTED  
TO KNOW  
ABOUT INDIANS  
BUT WERE  
AFRAID TO ASK

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SHAKOPEE MDEWAKANTON  
SIOUX COMMUNITY

EDUCATOR GUIDE: Manifest Destiny and the Role of Christian Missionaries in the Eradication of Indigenous People

# Manifest Destiny and the Role of Christian Missionaries in the Eradication of Indigenous People

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This lesson plan on Manifest Destiny and the Role of Christian Missionaries will explore the historical context and impact of the 19th-century American belief in the divine right to expand westward across the continent. Students will examine how this ideology led to the displacement and genocide of Indigenous Peoples, with a special focus on the role played by Christian missionaries in facilitating cultural and spiritual assimilation. Through a combination of primary source analysis, class discussion, and critical reflection, students will deepen their understanding of the complicated and problematic history of westward expansion and its enduring legacies.

## RELEVANT TEXT

Treuer, A. (2024). *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask: Young Readers Edition*, pp. 57-81.

## OBJECTIVES

- Recall significant events related to the treatment of Indigenous Peoples in the U.S. during westward expansion (remember)
- Apprehend the concept of genocide as applicable to the historical treatment of Indigenous Peoples in the United States (understand)
- Discriminate the role Doctrine of Discovery had in justifying the eradication of Indigenous communities (analyze)
- Interpret the role of Christian missionaries during the period of westward expansion (understand)
- Consider the enduring impact and legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery on Indigenous communities today (evaluate)
- Design a sound argument, supported by historical evidence, highlighting the significance of treaties in maintaining sovereignty (create)

## ACCOMMODATIONS TO CONSIDER MEETING STUDENT NEEDS

Visual Aids, Graphic Organizer, Preview Vocabulary, Oral Directions, Repeat/Clarify Directions, Reader, Text to Speech, Note Taker, Large Print, Audiobooks, Memory Aids, Visual Cues, Oral Response, Typed Response, Non-verbal Response, Speech to Text, Increased Wait Time, Verbal Prompts, Manipulatives, Graph Paper, Write in Book, Scribe, and others appropriate for the learner(s).

## RELEVANT STANDARDS

MN Tribal Nation Essential Understandings		MN State Standards Social Studies			MN State Standards ELA		
1.3	3.7	9.1.6.1	9.1.6.4	9.3.14.1	9.1.2.1	10.1.2.1	11.1.2.1
1.5	5.1	9.3.15.1	9.3.15.3	9.3.15.6	9.1.2.2	10.1.2.2	11.1.2.2
2.1	5.2	9.3.15.7	9.3.15.8	9.3.17.1	9.1.2.3	10.1.2.3	11.1.2.3
2.2	5.3	9.3.17.2	9.3.17.3	9.3.17.4	9.1.3.1	10.1.3.1	11.1.3.1
2.3	7.1	9.4.18.1	9.4.18.2	9.4.18.3	9.1.6.1	10.1.6.1	11.1.6.1
3.1	7.2	9.4.18.4	9.4.18.5	9.4.18.6	9.1.6.2	10.1.6.2	11.1.6.2
3.3	7.3	9.4.18.8	9.4.18.9	9.4.18.11	9.1.6.3	10.1.6.3	11.2.1.1
		9.4.18.12	9.4.18.13	9.4.18.14	9.1.9.1	10.1.9.1	11.2.1.2
		9.4.18.15	9.4.19.1	9.4.19.2	9.1.9.2	10.1.9.2	11.2.3.1
		9.4.19.5	9.4.19.7	9.4.19.8	9.2.1.1	10.2.1.1	11.2.3.2
		9.4.19.10	9.4.19.12	9.4.20.1	9.2.1.2	10.2.1.2	11.2.4.1
		9.4.20.2	9.4.20.4	9.4.20.5	9.2.1.3	10.2.1.3	11.2.4.2
		9.4.20.6	9.4.20.7	9.4.20.8	9.2.3.2	10.2.3.2	11.1.5.1
		9.4.20.10	9.4.20.12	9.4.20.14	9.2.4.1	10.2.4.1	11.2.5.2
		9.4.21.3	9.4.21.4	9.4.21.6	9.2.4.2	10.2.4.2	11.3.1.1
		9.4.21.7	9.4.21.8	9.4.21.9	9.2.5.1	10.2.5.1	
		9.4.21.11	9.4.21.12	9.4.21.13	9.2.5.2	10.2.5.2	
		9.4.22.1	9.4.22.3	9.4.22.7	9.2.7.1	10.2.7.1	
		9.4.22.8	9.4.22.10	9.4.22.14	9.2.7.2	10.2.7.2	
		9.4.23.1	9.4.23.3	9.4.23.4	9.3.1.1	10.3.1.1	
		9.4.23.6	9.4.24.2	9.4.24.3	9.3.1.2	10.3.1.2	
		9.4.24.4	9.4.24.5		9.3.1.3	10.3.1.3	

**ACTIVITY 1**

# Introduction—Native American Perspectives

**READINESS LEVEL: Awareness**

- A. Begin the activity by sharing selected quotes, oral histories, and firsthand accounts from Native American individuals or communities that were heavily impacted by westward expansion and forced relocation. Remember to provide appropriate context to each account to ensure learners can understand the historical significance of each viewpoint.
- B. After sharing these narratives, initiate a class discussion. Create an environment that encourages open-mindedness and asks learners to challenge their preexisting perceptions and biases.
- C. In the discussion, guide the learners to critically analyze these accounts from the perspective of the Indigenous people (particularly the Dakota and Anishinaabe). They should scrutinize the dominant Manifest Destiny narrative and compare it with the Indigenous narratives, examining the disparities and conflicts.
- D. Taking the empathetic approach, ask learners to imagine themselves in the situation and consider how they would feel if they were the victims. This activity encourages empathy and kindness—useful skills in understanding historical injustices.
- E. Next, lead learners into examining the Doctrine of Discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous communities today by using a T-chart or other relevant organizer. This allows learners to connect historical events to present situations.
- F. Confirm learners' understanding by asking them to summarize their findings in a written format, such as a reflection journal used regularly in class. This must not be submitted or graded and should be used solely for comprehension evaluation.
- G. Lastly, after reflections and discussions, encourage learners to establish their stance as global citizens: How can they integrate their newfound understanding and empathy towards Indigenous struggles into their everyday actions and decisions? This helps cultivate global citizenship and cultural competence.
- H. Remember, this activity demands respectful, thoughtful discussions and reflections.

**SKILLS**

- Empathy and Kindness
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence

**ACTIVITY 2**

# Demonstrate and Explain— Ethics of The Doctrine of Discovery

**READINESS LEVEL: Understand**

**Overview:** Using excerpts from the Doctrine of Discovery, students compare the moral and ethical stands of the document with current universally accepted principles of human rights. This allows students to grasp the contrast in societal acceptance.

- A. Begin with an introductory discussion of the Doctrine of Discovery and its historical context. Investigate the rationale behind the doctrine and its impact on Indigenous communities during westward expansion.
- B. Students should familiarize themselves with the text of the Doctrine of Discovery. Break down the document into digestible sections for students to isolate and examine the specific language and claims used.
- C. Facilitate a conversation around universally accepted principles of human rights; these should serve as the contrasting moral compass.
- D. Space should be created for students to draw parallels and differences between the Doctrine and current global human rights norms. Each student should note these observations for a later discussion. If needed, prompt students to reread the relevant text pages.
- E. Assign students the task of interpreting the role of Christian missionaries during this era by providing them with accurate, authentic primary sources. This would ensure they understand the full range of implications and influences during the period.
- F. Finally, bring students together for a guided, collective discussion on their findings. Encourage them to critically evaluate the decisions made during this era and how their perspectives might change if they had to adapt to a different time and values set. Record the findings on a smartboard, whiteboard, or chalkboard.
- G. Closure: Students are expected to write a summarizing piece detailing their understanding of the Doctrine of Discovery and its contrast to our modern perspective. This should include an analysis of the role of Christian missionaries during that period.

**SKILLS**

- Critical Thinking
- Adaptability

**ACTIVITY 3**

## Reviving a Culture Research & Presentation

**READINESS LEVEL: Understand**

**Overview:** Assign each student or group of students a Dakota or Anishinaabe Nation affected by the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny. Each will research and present on the Tribe's culture, the expansion's impact on the Tribe, and the Tribe's efforts to maintain or revive their culture and sovereignty.

- A. Each student or group will be assigned an Indigenous Tribe impacted by the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny.
- B. Research the assigned Tribe, focusing on the culture of the Tribe, significant events related to the treatment of the Tribe during the westward expansion, and how the expansion impacted the Tribe.
- C. Additionally, research the efforts the Tribe has made or is making to maintain and revive their culture and sovereignty in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery.
- D. Synthesize research findings to critically analyze how the Doctrine of Discovery has left a lasting impact on the assigned Tribe and Indigenous communities today.
- E. Develop a presentation to share the information collected. This should include historical events, present effects, and efforts to revive or maintain culture.
- F. Demonstrate initiative and proactivity by seeking out diverse sources of information, getting in touch with Tribal communities where possible, and going beyond standard academic resources to gather a rich, layered understanding of the topic.
- G. During the presentation, ensure to communicate the learned insights comprehensively and succinctly, demonstrating your understanding of the Tribe's struggles and their resilience.
- H. After each presentation, conduct a brief session where fellow students can ask questions, provide their thoughts, and connect the learned information with other Tribes, fostering a systems analysis approach.
- I. At the end of all the presentations, hold a class discussion to further delve into the enduring impact and legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery on Indigenous communities today, tying together the evidence gathered from the presentations. Summarize class learnings together on a smartboard, whiteboard, or chalkboard.

**SKILLS**

- Systems Analysis
- Initiative

**ACTIVITY 4**

## Reflection—Critical Journaling

**READINESS LEVEL: Application**

**Overview:** Regularly throughout the lesson, students will write in a reflection journal, summarizing what they've learned, expressing thoughts and feelings, asking questions, and making connections to modern issues. In this way, students can reflect on their learning process and the impact of this knowledge.

- A. Begin the unit by defining and discussing the concept of Manifest Destiny and Christian Missionaries. Focus on examples pertaining to the historical treatment of Indigenous Peoples in the U.S. Create a safe space for this discussion, as some students might find this topic difficult.
- B. Introduce the journaling activity. Explain to students that they will use this journal to reflect upon and analyze the information presented in this lesson.
- C. Remind students that the entries should not be just a factual summary of what was discussed in class, but also their personal thoughts, opinions, and analysis.
- D. Discuss how to make connections between historical events and current issues. Encourage students to consider the enduring impacts of these events on present Indigenous communities. Illustrate this with the Doctrine of Discovery's long-lasting impact on Indigenous Peoples.
- E. Call attention to the skill of grit and perseverance. Analyzing heavy subject matters is tough, but mastering complex issues contributes to personal and academic growth.
- F. Lastly, let students know that there is no right or wrong answer in this exercise. Their thoughts, feelings, and observations are unique to them, and all are valid. The aim is to stimulate critical thinking and reflect on heavy themes.

**SKILLS**

- Critical Thinking
- Grit and Perseverance

## Resources

### 25 Christian Mission and Indigenous Peoples | Oxford Academic

<https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/45222/chapter/387216088>

Indigenous Peoples have suffered greatly. Their worldviews and cultural practices were almost destroyed by the European empire, justified by Christianity. This chapter speaks to the Christian mission through the voice of Indigenous women and considers the mission's impact on their systems of meaning-making. It privileges the decolonizing work of the Indigenous women.

### The Religious Origins of Manifest Destiny | National Humanities Center

<http://www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/mandestiny.htm>

An indispensable source and the best place to begin is Conrad Cherry, *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (1998). On Manifest Destiny itself, two older books, Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny* (1958) and Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in America* (1963) remain useful.

### Manifest Destinies and Indigenous Peoples | Theodore Macdonald

<https://scholar.harvard.edu/tmacdon/publications/manifest-destinies-and-indigenous-peoples>

The essays in this book suggest new ways to view nationalism, as a theoretical concept, as well as frontier expansion as a historical phenomenon. Includes three to four maps, no figures, prints, or drawings.

Website. Last updated on 07/24/2014. Maybury-Lewis D, Macdonald T, Maybury-Lewis B. *Manifest Destinies and Indigenous Peoples.*; 2009 pp. 257.



## Glossary for Manifest Destiny and Christian Missionaries

**MANIFEST DESTINY:** The 19th-century doctrine that proclaimed that the United States was destined by God to expand its dominion and spread democracy across the entire North American continent

**DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY:** A legal principle that originated in the 15th century, granting Christian explorers the right to claim lands they “discovered” and laid claim to those lands for their Christian monarchs

**GENOCIDE:** The deliberate, purposeful killing of a large number of people from a specific ethnic or national group

**CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES:** People who are sent by the Christian church to teach and spread Christianity into other countries or regions

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:** Nations, communities, and groups of people who are native to or originally lived in a particular geographic region

**WESTWARD EXPANSION:** The 19th-century movement of settlers towards the American West, beginning with the Louisiana Purchase and fueled by the Gold Rush, the Oregon Trail, and a belief in Manifest Destiny

**CULTURAL ASSIMILATION:** The process by which a person or a group’s language, culture, or mannerisms begin to resemble those of another group

**DISPLACEMENT:** The enforced departure of people from their homes

**SOVEREIGNTY:** Supreme power, authority, or control

**EMPATHY:** The ability to understand and share someone else’s feelings

**HUMAN RIGHTS:** The rights that every person should have, such as free speech, education, and equality

**CULTURAL COMPETENCE:** The ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures

## Suggested Learning Extension(s)

### **Manifest Destiny:**

#### **Unpacking the Concept**

Begin the lesson by asking students to brainstorm what they already know about Manifest Destiny. On a shared board or sheet of flip chart paper, write down the phrase “Manifest Destiny” and have students throw out any terms or associations that come to mind. Then, divide students into groups and assign each one to examine a different primary source document (e.g., newspaper articles, political cartoons, personal letters) related to Manifest Destiny. Each group should present their document and their analysis to the class, discussing how it demonstrates the concept of Manifest Destiny.

### **Evolving Maps:**

#### **Tracing the Colonial Expansion**

Students are provided with a progression of U.S. maps spanning the Manifest Destiny era. They will discuss changes in territories and state borders, while identifying when and how these changes may have affected Indigenous communities. This activity aims to visually demonstrate the scale and impact of expansion.

### **Voice of the Victim:**

#### **Native American Perspectives**

Introduce Indigenous viewpoints and narratives about Manifest Destiny. Share quotes, oral histories, and firsthand accounts from Indigenous individuals or communities impacted by westward expansion and forced relocation. Have students discuss and reflect on these narratives, comparing them with the dominant Manifest Destiny narrative.

### **The Doctrine of Discovery:**

#### **A Moral Contrast**

Using excerpts from the Doctrine of Discovery, students should compare the moral and ethical stands of the document with current universally accepted principles of human rights. This allows students to grasp the contrast in societal acceptance.

### **Missionary Journals:**

#### **Rewinding the Past**

Present students with excerpts from journals or letters written by Christian missionaries during the westward expansion. Discuss the connotations, intentions, and implications of the missionaries’ writings as they worked among Indigenous populations.

### **Policy & Prejudice:**

#### **Critique of Legislation**

Choose several key pieces of legislation (e.g., Indian Removal Act, Dawes Act) and discuss how they infringed on the rights and lives of Indigenous Peoples. Have students critically analyze the text of legislation from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples and challenge them to articulate the legal justifications used for these policies.

### **Debating Destiny**

Break the class into small groups and have each take on the role of a different stakeholder (e.g., settlers, missionaries, government officials, Indigenous Peoples) during the time of Manifest Destiny. Each group will prepare and present a debate argument from their assigned perspective, hinging on the concept of “divine right” brought up in Manifest Destiny.

### **Reviving a Culture:**

#### **Research & Presentation**

Assign each student or group of students to an Indigenous Tribe that was affected by the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny. Each will research and present on the Tribe’s culture, including the expansion’s impact on the Tribe and their efforts to maintain or revive their culture and sovereignty.

**Re-Drafting Treaty Terms**

Students will review actual treaties made between Indigenous Tribes and the U.S. government, and then, in pairs or small groups, attempt to re-draft one article of the treaty in a way that they believe would be fairer or more just. Each group will defend their changes in a class discussion.

**Model UN: The Doctrine Then and Now**

As a role-playing exercise, have the class simulate a United Nations committee, in which countries are discussing the historical impact and current implications of the Doctrine of Discovery. Students will reflect on the social, cultural, and political legacies of this doctrine, and consider how modern policies can address historical injustices.

**Try Walking in My Shoes**

Ask students to reflect and write about how they might feel and react as Indigenous people facing forced relocation and assimilation. Encourage students to consider not only the physical hardships but also the emotional and cultural impacts. This exercise aims to foster empathy and deeper understanding.

**Critical Journaling**

Regularly throughout the unit, students will write in a reflection journal, summarizing what they've learned, expressing their thoughts and feelings, asking questions, and making connections to modern issues. In this way, students can reflect on their learning process and the impact of this knowledge.

**PRAISE FOR**

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**ANTON TREUER** (pronounced troy-er) is Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University and author of many books. His equity, education, and cultural work has put him on a path of service around the nation and the world.

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Educator guide developed by Anjanette Parisien.

Designed by Suet Chong.