



Navajo Scavenger Hunt

Read the passage below and answer the questions

The Navajo people held many interesting religious ceremonies and celebrations. Most of their ceremonies were held to restore harmony. The Navajo believed in good and evil, but that evil could take over if the universe was not in harmony. Ceremonies were held to honor the “holy people” of Navajo culture such as Coyote, Changing Woman, and the Corn People.

A “sing” was one of the most important Navajo ceremonies. In a sing, a medicine man might perform an old, complicated song and dance designed to restore harmony, heal the sick, protect a family, promote the growth of crops, or protect a village’s herds. The sing was always dedicated to one of the “holy people.”

A “blessingway” was a ceremony in which something was requested of the “Holy People.” The request could be as simple as a blessing over a newborn baby or newly conceived marriage, or, for protection against enemies in a pending raid. The Navajos believed that the “Holy People” would grant their requests if they approved of the blessingway, or, if they were displeased, evil spirits could interfere.

The Navajos made “sand paintings” as part of a sing or blessingway. A sand painting was a large picture made on the floor of a hut made of different colored sands that were carefully crafted between the second and third fingers. The pictures could be ten or twelve feet long and told of magical stories or characters with super powers. Sand paintings were made in the hopes of healing people. Such paintings were destroyed before nightfall so that evil spirits could not infiltrate them. Traditionally, sand paintings were made by medicine men who wished to restore harmony toward a sick person. After the sand painting was finished, the “patient” sat on it and hoped that the powers of the “holy people” could be absorbed. After the ceremony, the sand painting was considered poisonous because it absorbed an illness or disease.



USE THE PASSAGE ABOVE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW

- 1.) The Navajo believed that evil could take over if the universe was not in _____.
- 2.) A _____ was a ceremony dedicated to the “holy people” that had many different purposes.
- 3.) A _____ was a ceremony that was performed to request something from the “holy people.”
- 4.) Sand Paintings were actually pictures that told stories of magical powers that were carefully crafted between the _____ and third finger of the artist.
- 5.) Sand paintings were destroyed before _____ so evil spirits could not get into them.
- 6.) A sand painting could up to _____ feet long.
- 7.) After the ceremony, the sand painting was considered _____ because it had absorbed sickness or disease.
- 8.) Who usually performed sings or made sand paintings?

ANSWERS

- 1.) The Navajo believed that evil could take over if the universe was not in **harmony**.
- 2.) A **sing** was a ceremony dedicated to the “holy people” that had many different purposes.
- 3.) A **blessingway** was a ceremony that was performed to request something from the “holy people.”
- 4.) Sand Paintings were actually pictures that told stories of magical powers that were carefully crafted between the **second** and third finger of the artist.
- 5.) Sand paintings were destroyed before **nightfall** so evil spirits could not get into them.
- 6.) A sand painting could up to **12** feet long.
- 7.) After the ceremony, the sand painting was considered **poisonous** because it had absorbed sickness or disease.
- 8.) Who usually performed sings or made sand paintings?

Medicine man