

# Penn Museum

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM  
of ARCHAEOLOGY and ANTHROPOLOGY

## THE SOUTHWEST GALLERY

*Living in Balance: The Universe of the Hopi, Zuni, Navajo and Apache* looks at the many sacred and cultural connections these Native Americans have with their environment. An Apache *Tipi* and a Navajo *hogan* framework, a walk-in sky theater, and more than 300 objects offer information about the history and cultural traditions of these native peoples.

Rituals and activities unique to the cultures of the Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Apache peoples are presented in order to highlight a way of life that sees everything in the universe as alive. Rather than being in a dominant relationship with the universe, people are seen as one more part of it. So, with the help of rituals, these people are living in balance with their environment.

### FUN FACTS

- 1) A Hopi girl shows her wish to marry a boy by baking him a special cake which she makes out of sweet corn. Then one evening she and her mother go to the boy's house and present his family with ground corn. If they accept this gift, she and her mother are asked into the house and the marriage is announced.
- 2) The ritual washing of the bride's and groom's hair together, by both of their families, is the actual point of marriage for Hopi couples. The final washing is done by the two mothers who twist the bride and groom's hair together as a symbol of their new relationship. How many weddings have you attended? What special rituals are involved in weddings in your family? At what point in the wedding ceremony is the couple really married?
- 3) When Hopi children are born, mother and child are secluded for 20 days in a darkened room. On the 20th day the child is welcomed into Hopi society in a special naming ceremony. Mother and child then come out of the darkness along a path of corn meal and the mother presents the new life to the rising sun. Children

are not considered a part of the Hopi until they have been named. What special things do you and your family do when a child is born?

4) Zunis believe that after death people return to this world as the spirit of an animal. So, the spirits of their ancestors live on in the animals. If you could choose, what animal would you like to be? Why?

5) Navajo children are encouraged to run at dawn when the sun is rising in the east. The Navajo believe that physical and mental knowledge come from this sacred direction. The Navajo house, or *hogan*, is always built with the door facing the rising sun. You can learn more about their attitudes concerning the sun by visiting the *Sky Dome Theater* in the exhibit.

6) Zunis believe their Pueblo is the center of the world. They define their universe in 6 directions, arranged counter-clockwise: winter cold from the north, spring winds and rains from the west, hot dry summer days from the south and the cool winds of fall from the east, as well as the zenith (sky) and its opposite, the nadir. They also associate birds, plants, animals and colors with these six directions because they believe that everything that comes from the earth has a life-giving role.

7) Many societies have special puberty rites for boys. The Apache, in contrast with other societies, publicly celebrate a girl's coming of age. These ceremonies are held almost every weekend during the summer and fall. What rites of passage do you celebrate?

### Words to Learn

arroyo  
manta  
clan  
metate

hogan  
mesa  
hozho  
piki

katsina  
pueblo  
kiva  
tihu