

CULTURAL  
AWARENESS

OBSERVANCE

## National American Indian Heritage Month November



### Did you know?

American Indians and Alaskan Natives attach special significance to the Eagle and its feathers. The feather symbolizes trust, honor, strength, wisdom, power, and freedom. To be given an Eagle feather is the highest honor that can be awarded within some indigenous cultures. And just like the American flag, it must be handled with care and can never be dropped on the ground.

## Of all the North American Indigenous teachings, the Seven Grandfather Teachings are the most commonly shared from coast to coast.

**Humility** is represented by the **wolf**. For the wolf, life is lived for his pack and the ultimate shame is to be outcast. Humility is to know that you are a sacred part of creation. Live life selflessly and not selfishly.

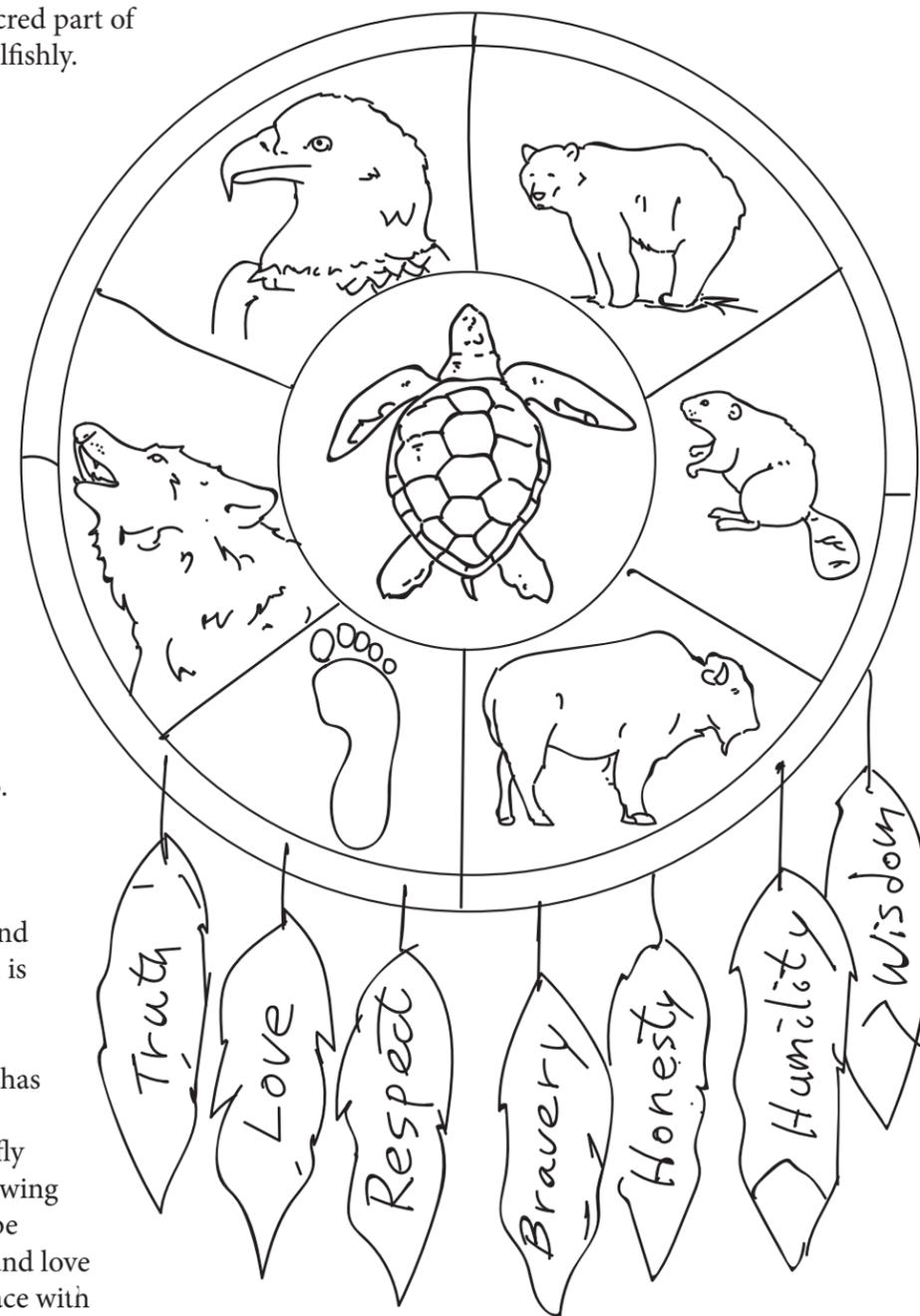
**Bravery** is represented by the **bear**. The mother bear has the courage and strength to face her fears and challenges while protecting her young. The bear also shows us how to live a balanced life with rest, survival, and play.

The **beaver** represents **wisdom** because he uses his natural gift wisely for his survival. The beaver also alters his environment in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way for the benefit of his family. To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.

**Respect** is represented by the **buffalo**. The buffalo gives every part of his being to sustain the human way of living, not because he is of less value, but because he respects the balance and needs of others. To honor all creation is to have respect.

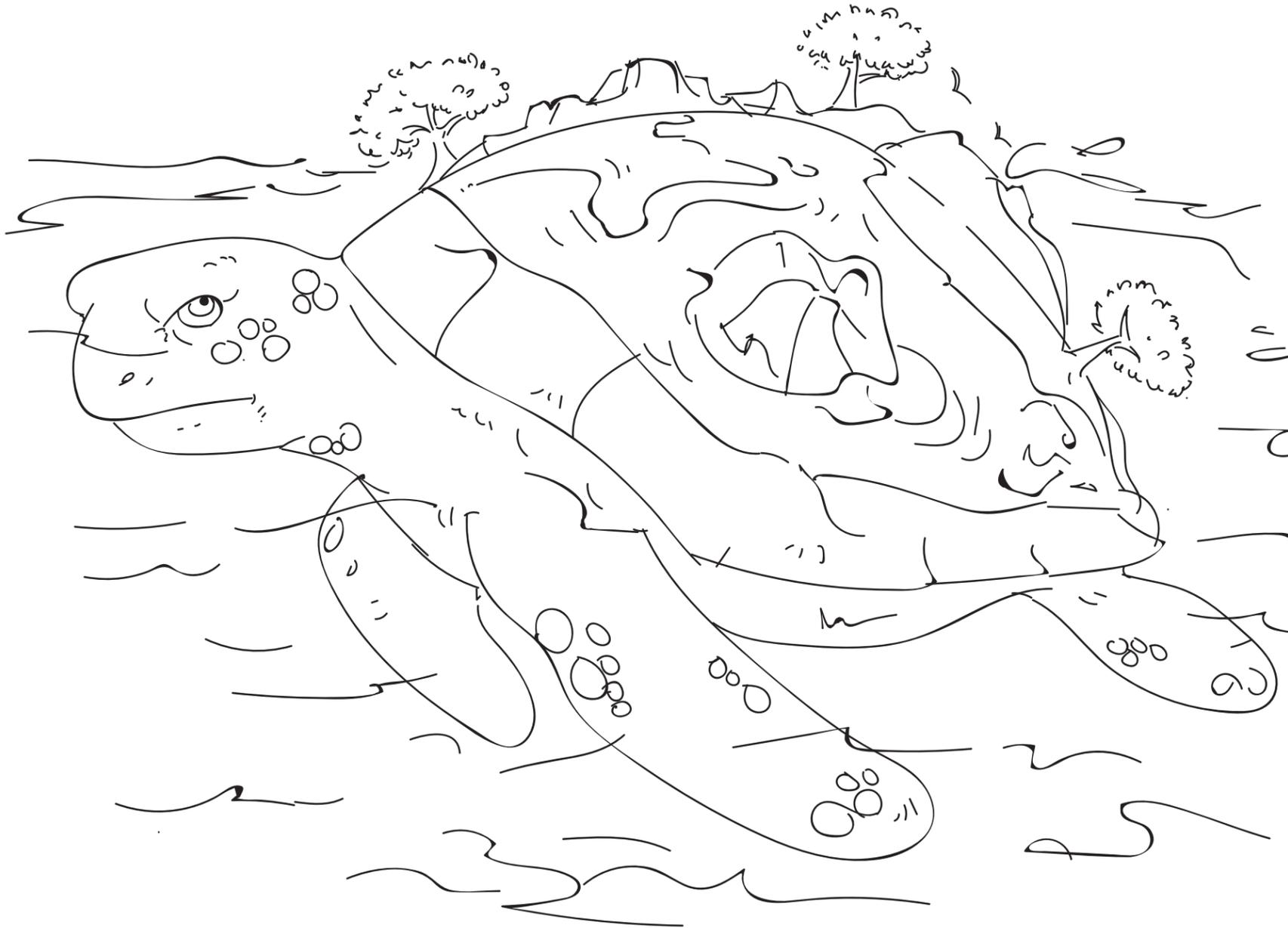
The **eagle** represents **love** because he has the strength to carry all the teachings of the universe and has the ability to fly highest and closest to the creator. Knowing love is to know peace and love must be unconditional. This is to know love and love yourself truly. Then you will be at peace with yourself, the balance of life, and the creator.

**Honesty** is represented by the **sabe (humans)**. The sabe reminds us to be ourselves and not someone we are not. To walk through life with integrity is to know honesty. Be honest with yourself. Recognize and accept who you are. Accept and use the gifts you have been given. Do not seek to deceive yourself or others.



**The American Indian/Alaska Native** culture is known for its rich oral tradition. Stories were shared to pass down history, traditions, customs, rituals, and legends.

In **American Indian** folklore, the American continent is referred to as “Turtle Island.” It is said that the Turtle carries the weight of the land with the continent on her back. The turtle lives life in a slow and meticulous manner because she understands the importance of both the journey and the destination.



### Did you know?

On June 7, 2017, 175 American Indians who landed on Omaha Beach were honored with a granite, turtle-shaped monument in Saint Laurent sur Mer, France, on the 73rd anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy.



go to [www.deomi.org](http://www.deomi.org) for more observance information

### Did you know there are six different types of Totem Poles?

1. Storytelling poles - Native Alaskans used symbols to preserve stories and legends passing them down from one generation to the next.

2. Memorial poles - Served to highlight the life of an important tribal member.

3. House poles - Told of a tribal clans ancestry and lineage.

4. Shame poles - Served as a reminder to both groups and individuals that offensive behavior was unacceptable. Poor leadership, tribal quarrels, murders, and any unfulfilled obligations were reasons for a shame pole to be erected.

5. Commemorative poles - Usually the largest poles, they were carved to celebrate a specific occasion.

6. Mortuary poles - Poles were hollowed out in the back to serve as a holder for a deceased tribal member's ashes while some were used as grave markers.

