

## “SMUDGING” CEREMONY



### **PURPOSE:**

- To give up any negative energies, thoughts, and feelings
- To begin in a good way, with a good heart, with a receptive spirit, with an open and clear mind and come to “one mind”
- To cleanse ourselves mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually
- To offer our tobacco in prayer for our Creator to cleanse these and return renewed energy

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- ❖ To understand preparation for smudging
- ❖ To understand the use of sacred medicines
- ❖ To participate in a smudging ceremony



## SMUDGING

The word “*smudging*” means to build a small smoky fire to drive away any negative energies, thoughts, or feelings.



Each part of the smudge kit and the smudging process signifies one of the four elements, that, when used, evokes the fifth element, life energy.

The items used in the Sacred Smudging Ceremony are:

- A small "bowl" or an abalone shell, a gift from the waters of Mother Earth to build the smoky fire
- The shell represents **WATER**, a gift from the ocean



- One herb or a combination of dried herbs: tobacco, cedar, sage, sweetgrass are placed in the bowl



- The unlit herbs and ashes represent the **EARTH**
- The lit herb represents the **FIRE**
- The smoke represents the **AIR**
  
- An eagle feather, a gift from the winged friends, is used to help our prayers rise on the smoke and be taken up to the Creator
- The entire kit can be carried in a medicine bag.



## THE EAGLE FEATHER



- The eagle feather represents the eagle chosen by the Creator:
  - to be the leader of all the birds
  - one who flies the highest and sees the farthest
  - a messenger to the Creator.
- With the eagle feather, the Creator is honoured in the highest.
- The eagle feather is kept in a little “*home*” – a special feather holder.
- The eagle feather is fed when it is held at sacred ceremonies or worn.
- The eagle feather is recharged with sacred energy when held or worn.
- The eagle feather must never be abused, disrespected, or contaminated.



## ITEMS NEEDED FOR SMUDGING

### Items:

- Wooden matches (Do not use your wind power to blow out fire power, put match into spent match container with sand)



- Charcoal, if no charcoal, roll sage tightly, then light with wooden match
- First offer a small pinch of tobacco: take with right hand, place into left hand, say and offer a prayer, coming from your heart
- Choose one or more of the Sacred medicines (choice, usually sage, especially if women in attendance)



- Smudge Feather: front and back, in sign of the cross



- Smudge yourself using smudging prayer



- Then go around in clockwise direction in a circle beginning in the east, south, west, and north, offer the smudge bowl with the burning sacred medicine, hold the eagle feather above each person's head while they smudge. If person has never smudge, assist them by saying very softly: hands, eyes, ears, mouth, mind, whole body (sometimes the person may turn to have their back smudged from their head down to feet, tapping with the feather on shoulder to indicate you are finished the back), hear, spirit (centre of body)

## PREPARING FOR SMUDGING



Before we begin, we must cleanse ourselves:

- physically
- mentally,
- emotionally
- spiritually

This is done so that we can begin:

- in a good way,
- with a good heart,
- with an open and clear mind,
- with a receptive spirit.

The burning of one or more of the sacred medicine(s):

- tobacco,
- cedar,
- sage,
- sweetgrass

gives us strength and makes us a solid group.

It takes away any negative thoughts

It brings out positive feelings and good thoughts.

It helps us to come together to one mind.

Whatever prayers or negative feelings we place on the smoke, these are carried up to the Creator, to be cleansed and returned to us as renewed energy.



### SMUDGING PRAYER



*Cupping the smoke with my hands I wash my hands with the medicine smoke and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my hands that I may always do good work for you and that my hands will not harm another person.”**

*Cupping the smoke with my hands, I draw the medicine over my eyes and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my eyes that I may see the situations clearly so that I may see what need to be done to help another person.”**

*Cupping the smoke with my hands, I draw the medicine over my ears and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my ears that I may hear what is really being said to be able to help another person.”**

*Cupping the smoke with my hands, I draw the medicine over my mouth and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my mouth that I may always speak good words and that they do not harm another person.”**

*Cupping the smoke with my hands, I draw the medicine over my mind and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my mind that I may not have any negative thoughts, only good thoughts.”**

*Cupping the smoke with my hands, I draw the medicine over my whole body, front and back, and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my whole body that I may not have any negative feelings.”**

*Cupping the smoke with my hands, I draw the medicine over my heart and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my heart that I may not have a heavy heart.”**

*Cupping the smoke with my hands, I draw the medicine over my spirit and say:*

**“Creator God, cleanse my spirit that I may be receptive to the teachings (Word).”**

**I place all negative thought and feelings unto the rising smoke and I take the eagle feather and ask the eagle to carry these to you for your cleansing and ask for your gift of renewed energy.**

**Miigwetch, Miigwetch, Miigwetch, Miigwetch**

Rosella M. Kinoshameg