

Iroquois Religion and Ritual

Creation Story

- Passed down through oral tradition
- Told the story of the beginning of the Iroquois, and good and evil.
- Based on the importance of nature



Responsibility to respect the world

- Give thanks to the Creator
- Celebrate good luck with festivals

Festivals honored the Creator and the spirits of nature

- Green Corn Festival
- Harvest Festival
- Maple Festival
- Planting Ceremony
- Strawberry Festival
- Sun Festival
- Thunder Ceremony

Midwinter Festival

- Held when men returned from late-fall hunt
- Time of renewal
- Cleaned out longhouses, lit fires; stirred other people's fires
- Medicine men stirred the fires
- Included feasts, dances, and games such as lacrosse

Important to give thanks

- Thank others with gifts or kind deeds
- Thanked gods with dances

Tobacco used to honor the gods

- Men grew it specifically for this purpose
- Carried prayers through the rising smoke to the Creator

Healers dealt with sickness and death

- Used medicinal plants to cure
- Medicine societies important part of healing process
- Believed evil spirits caused illness

False Face Society cured illness

- Carved masks on living tree trunk to capture spirit of tree
- Men wore masks, sprinkled tobacco, danced and chanted to call out healing spirits



Corn Husk Face Society represented spirits of the fields

- Masks made out of corn husks
- Came together to ensure a good harvest
- Honor corn, beans and squash

