

THE NATIONS AS OUR NEIGHBORS

LESSONS FOR MISSION MINDED KIDS

LESSON 8

THE AMBERMAN FAMILY IN NEW MEXICO



The Nations As Our Neighbors

Lesson 8: The Amberman Family in New Mexico

Goals for Lesson 8:

- Students will be introduced to E.C. missionaries, Randy and Chris Amberman, serving the Navajo people in New Mexico.
- Students will understand part of the history surrounding the Navajo people, and their struggles with accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Students will realize that “lost” people live in every culture and that Christ came to seek the heart of every person, and save all who are lost.

Verse for the Amberman Family

For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." Luke 19:10

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Write the verse on a large paper, a board, or a transparency.
- Locate a map that shows the states of the U.S. If you want, you can locate Farmington, NM (the town closest to the Ambermans) and mark it on the map.
- Trim around the Amberman’s prayer card picture, and the Navajo pictures and mount them on cardstock or construction paper for stability.
- Make a copy of the “Hope for the Navajos” puzzle for each child, or plan to team the older students with younger students, and make one copy for each team.
- Decide whether you will make any of the included recipes. Gather ingredients and prepare food ahead of time. Bring food and any plates, napkins or utensils necessary.
- Decide if you will be making cards for the Navajo children. Gather paper and art supplies. Obtain your student’s mailing addresses, and permission from parents if necessary.
- Copy dolls onto tan cardstock, and make enough copies of the clothing and coloring pages to be used in class or sent home. Scissors will be needed for dolls.

Lesson Plan:

- Begin with prayer.
- Introduce the verse. It is a simple one, and easily memorized, but applies deeply to the Navajo people.
- Read or tell the story, using the map and pictures as directed, and discussing as necessary. Some of your students may have learned some of the Navajo history, or studied some of the Native American traditions in school.
- Give each student or pair of students a copy of the “Hope for the Navajos” puzzle. Instruct them to find the hidden words. Letters that are left over should be placed in order on the blanks at the bottom of the page. The hidden message will reveal the source of hope for the Navajo people. (The memory verse for today.) Talk about what it means to be “lost”, and the fact that there are lost people living in every culture and neighborhood. Make sure students know who the “Son of Man” is, and talk about ways that He “seeks” those who are lost. (Does He seek people of every culture in the same ways?)
- If you will be using the food samples, serve what you have made and discuss this type of food in comparison to what your students typically eat, and any other ethnic foods you have recently sampled.
- If you will be making the cards, lay out the art supplies and explain the project. Make sure your students have adequate time to finish their card in class, and collect all cards to be mailed in a group. Take a group picture if desired.
- Paper dolls and coloring pages may be used instead of food sampling or card making, or may be sent home as additional activities.

Lesson 8 Story: The Amberman Family in New Mexico

A long time ago, the Navajo people lived in the southwest area of the United States. They had a vast expanse of land they considered their sacred homeland, in what are now the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado. **(Show this area on a U.S. map and relate it to the area your students live.)** They were sheep herders mostly and traveled to where it was best for their sheep, moving about according to the season and where the best grazing was. They also grew many fruit trees and vegetable crops such as corn, beans and squash. Their homes, called **hogans**, were eight-sided houses made of wood and covered in mud, with the door always facing east to welcome the sun each morning. **(Show picture of hogan.)** Since there are many mountains in the area where they lived, it could get quite cold, and so the traditional clothing included blankets and warm leggings for the men, and long dresses made of velvet or wool for the ladies. **(Show picture of traditional clothing.)** Making baskets and pottery and weaving cloth and blankets from their sheep's wool were common tasks.

As more and more European settlers moved into the area where the Navajo people lived, there began to be some trouble over who should be able to live in that area. In the spring of 1864, the U.S. government sent General Kit Carson and his army of soldiers to gather up the Navajo people and make them move to another area. As the soldiers came in, they destroyed the Navajo hogans and their fields and orchards and flocks of sheep. They made all of the Navajo families walk for 300 miles to Fort Sumner in New Mexico. The Navajo people are storytellers, and they remember this very sad time as "The Long Walk". They remember this time and still tell their children and grandchildren stories about the sadness of their people. After living at Fort Sumner for five years, the Navajo people were allowed to go back to live in a small portion of their original sacred homeland. The U.S. government appointed a piece of land to belong to the Navajo people and called it their reservation. This land is where they still live. They are free to remember their own traditions and culture, and raise their children in the Navajo way. The traditional Navajo language is still spoken throughout this area, but most of the Navajo speak English fluently as well. Today, although not all of them live on the Navajo reservation, almost 300,000 people are descendents of the Navajos.

Randy and Chris Amberman are E.C. missionaries who live with the Navajo people on their reservation. **(Show prayer card picture)** They are there to help and serve the Navajo people and to teach them about Jesus. Many Navajos have trouble understanding that Jesus came to earth and died to take away their sins and make a way for them to go to Heaven. The Navajos have lived in this same area for hundreds of years and have their own traditions and culture. Many of their beliefs center around superstitions and ancient stories. They think that their Navajo beliefs don't apply to the other Americans (the Anglos), so when they hear stories about Jesus, they often think that the "Anglo's" religion doesn't apply to them.

Chris and Randy have five children. The three oldest are grown and live in other states, but the two youngest, Yvonne and Megan still live at home and go to high school. The area of the reservation where they live is called a high desert. It is fairly mountainous, and very dry. They have a small farm, where they raise some beef cattle, a horse, and lots of chickens. They

sell the chicken eggs, and since there is a river nearby, they are able to irrigate the land to grow fields of hay and pasture grass, and a vegetable garden.

In this area of the United States, the winters are pretty mild, with daytime temperatures in the 40's and dropping to below 30 at night. Sometimes they get a little snow, but it never lasts very long. Fall and spring are long and sunny with warm temperatures, and summers are hot during the days and cool at night. The Grand Canyon and the Canyon de Chelly are not far away from where they live.

Randy works during the day driving a delivery truck. Many of the people he meets each day are Navajo people. He always takes time to encourage and listen to them, and looks for ways to pray for them or meet their needs. He leads a Bible study on Wednesday evenings at one of the churches in Farmington (the nearest town).

Chris works at an after-school program for the Navajo children, called the Neighborhood House. She picks kids up at the school in a van and drives them to the Neighborhood House, and then takes them all home afterwards. The kids have a snack there and have time to work on their homework. Then Chris teaches them a Bible lesson and does a craft or activity with them. Since the Navajo people have always taught their children through storytelling, Chris always tries to tell the Bible stories, rather than read them, and they often act out the lessons to help illustrate the teaching. She also emphasizes over and over that Jesus came and died for everyone, not just white people. The Navajo people tend to see Christianity as a religion for Anglos that does not apply to Navajos, in the same way that their ancient traditions do not apply to Anglos. So, sometimes they listen respectfully to the story of Jesus but in their mind they are thinking that it has nothing to do with them.

Many of the Navajo people live in very difficult circumstances. Many homes do not have a father living with them, and many are very poor. Alcohol and abuse are common problems, and many of the children grow up without much hope or direction for their lives. When Navajo people do accept Christianity, it is difficult for the new believers to know how to live. They want to keep their own identity as Navajo people, and live within their own culture, but many of their old traditions do not line up with the Bible's teachings. They need to figure out how to embrace Christ and still remain Navajo. For example, visiting the medicine man for healing would no longer be acceptable for a Christian, but making pottery, weaving, and using their traditional language and music style would all be good ways to keep their culture alive.

Please pray for Chris and Randy Amberman and their family, as they work among the Navajo people. Pray that the Navajo people would understand that Christ died for all people, and that He has come to save all people who are lost in their sin.



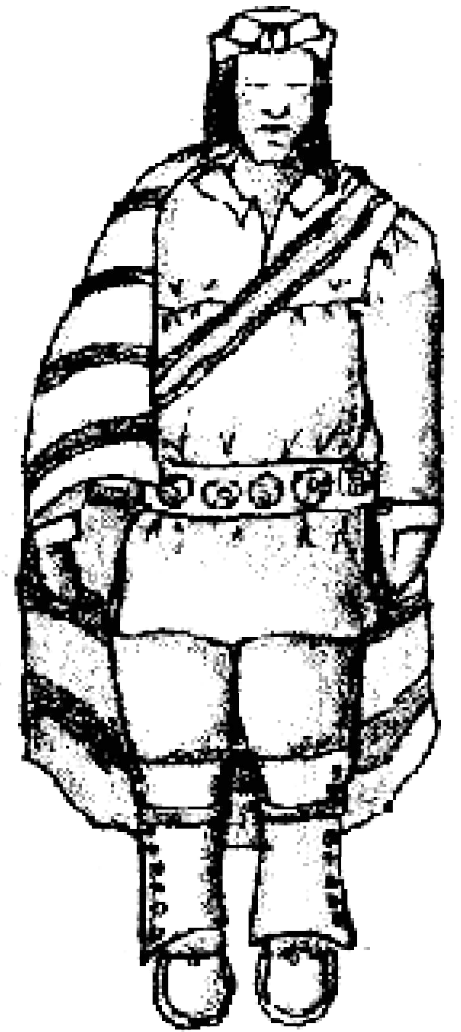
Traditional Navajo hogan

silver
squash
blossom
necklace



velvet
dress

NAVAJO
1900'S



NAVAJO
1840

THE AMBERMANS

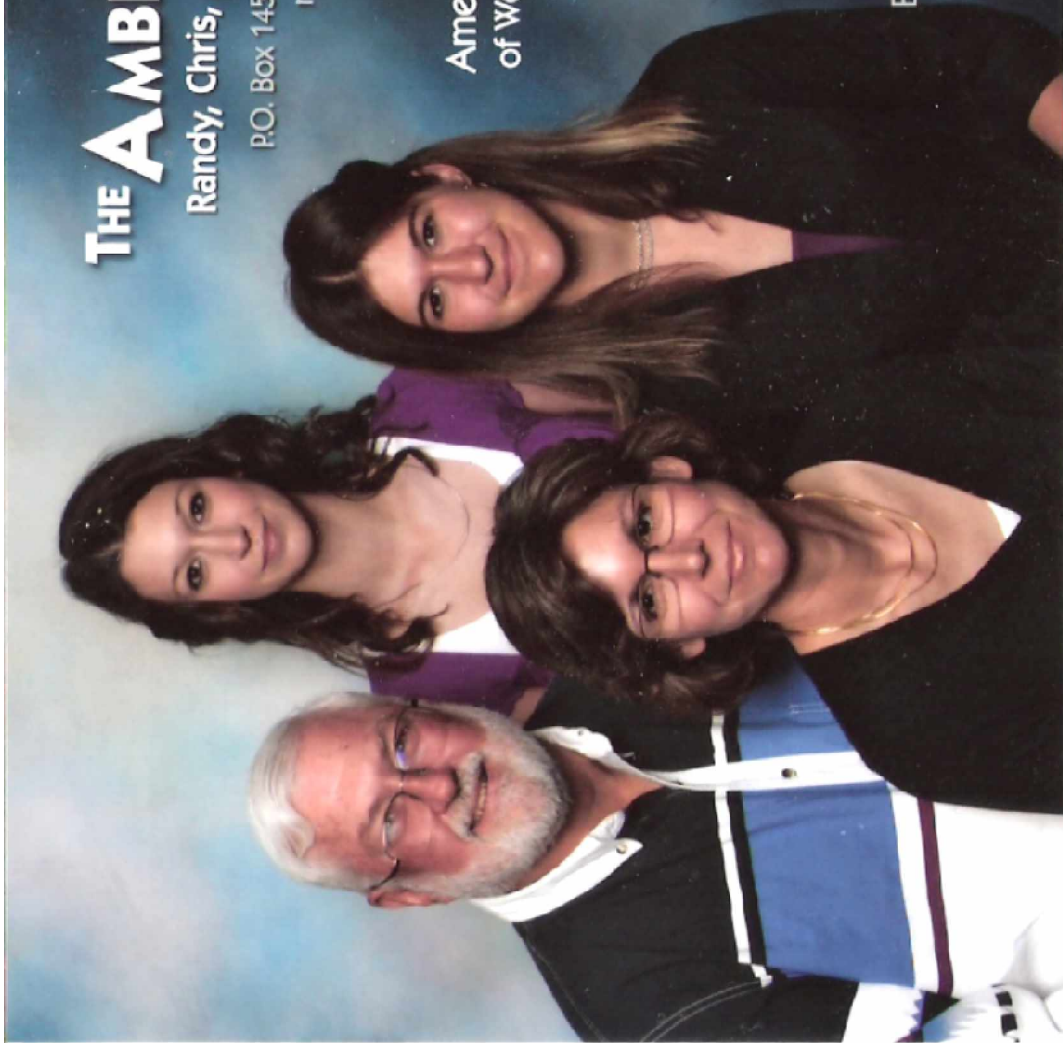
Randy, Chris, Megan & Yvonne

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ramberman@msn.com

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American Indian Field
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Hope for the Navajos

N S N O S A E S C F G S G N K
E R F O R T H H A R E N D E L
W E E S O N I R A I I E R I A
M I O F M C M N R L L E N G W
E D A N K I D A L I N M O H G
X L C E N C N E V M O A I B N
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N I T R O I H S A V E T R O T
M S U F N A M R E B M A R D H
O C S S R N O S R A C T I K E
K W H D L E G G I N G S O A R
E L S O S T L S T E K N A L B

AMBERMAN
DELIVERY TRUCK
GRAND CANYON
LEGGINGS
NEIGHBORHOOD
SEASONS
THE LONG WALK

BLANKETS
FARMINGTON
IRRIGATION
MISSIONARIES
NEW MEXICO
SOLDIERS

CHICKENS
FORT SUMNER
KIT CARSON
MOUNTAINS
ORCHARDS
STORYTELLING

Navajo Fry Bread

Ingredients

- 1/4 Cup instant DRY Milk powder
- 1 Tbl. Baking Powder
- 1 ½ tsps. Salt
- 3 Cups Unsifted Flour
- 1 1/3 Cup Warm Water
- Lard or Oil for Frying.

Directions

Mix together dry ingredients

Mix in water & knead on floured surface until it isn't sticky anymore.

Put the dough in a plastic bag or wrap with plastic wrap to keep the dough from drying out.

Heat lard or oil in cast iron frying pan, but don't let it smoke!

Pull off a piece of dough about the size of an egg & shape into about a 9 inch round.

Poke a hole in the middle & add to hot oil & fry on each side until golden.

Drain on paper towels.

Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar, or serve plain with rice.

Navajo-Style Rice

Ingredients

- 2 cups white long grain rice
- 2 strips of uncooked bacon, sliced in 1/4" strips
- ½ green bell pepper, diced
- ½ small yellow onion, diced
- 4 oz. can tomato sauce
- 3 ½ cups cold water
- salt and pepper to taste

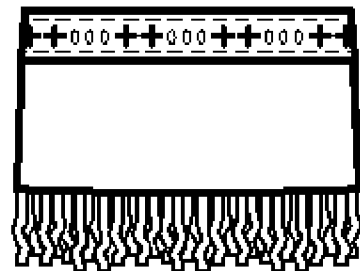
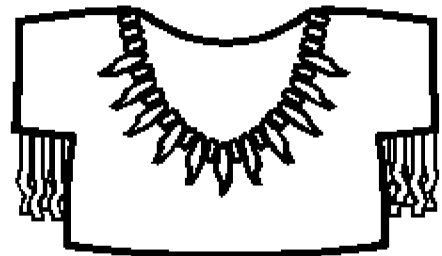
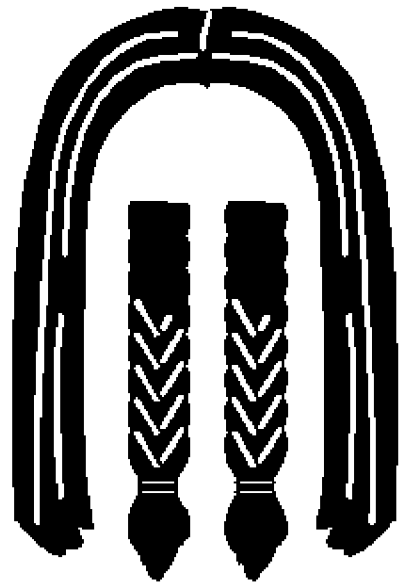
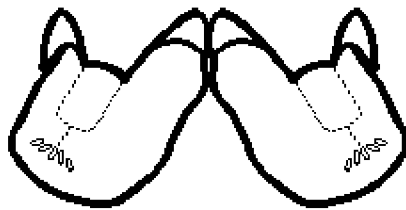
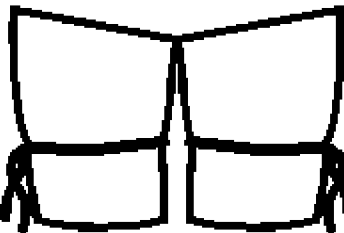
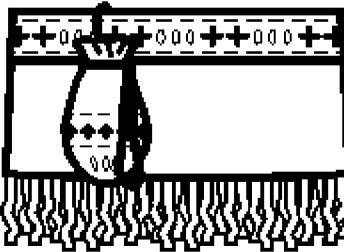
Directions

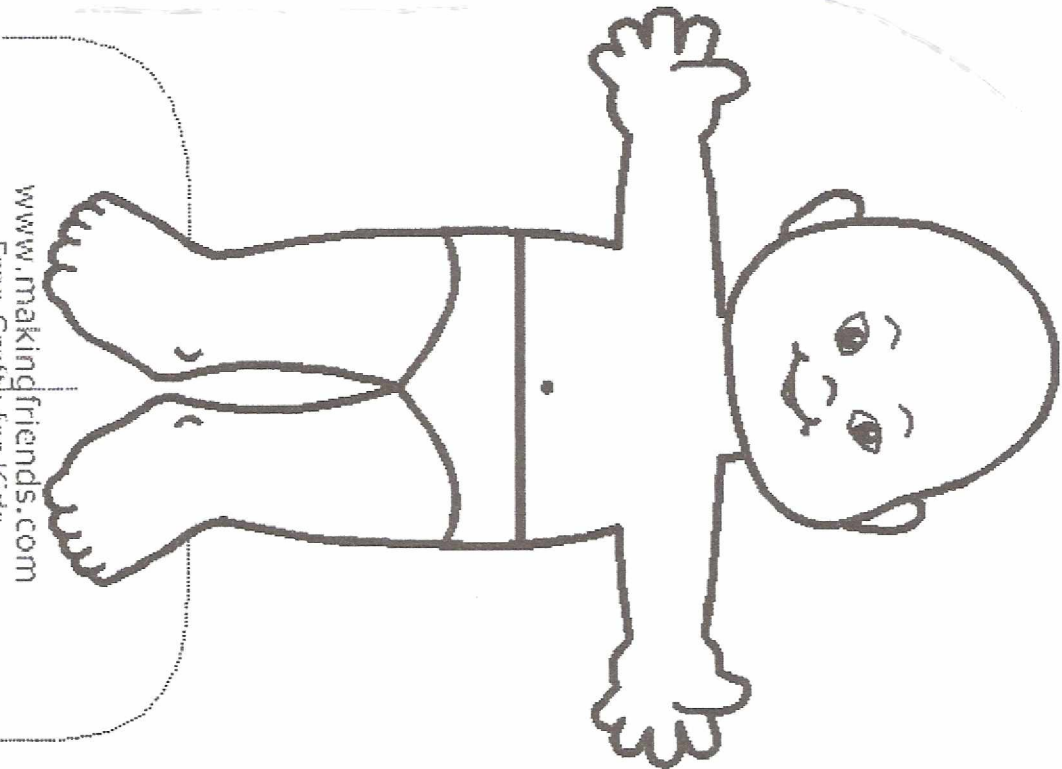
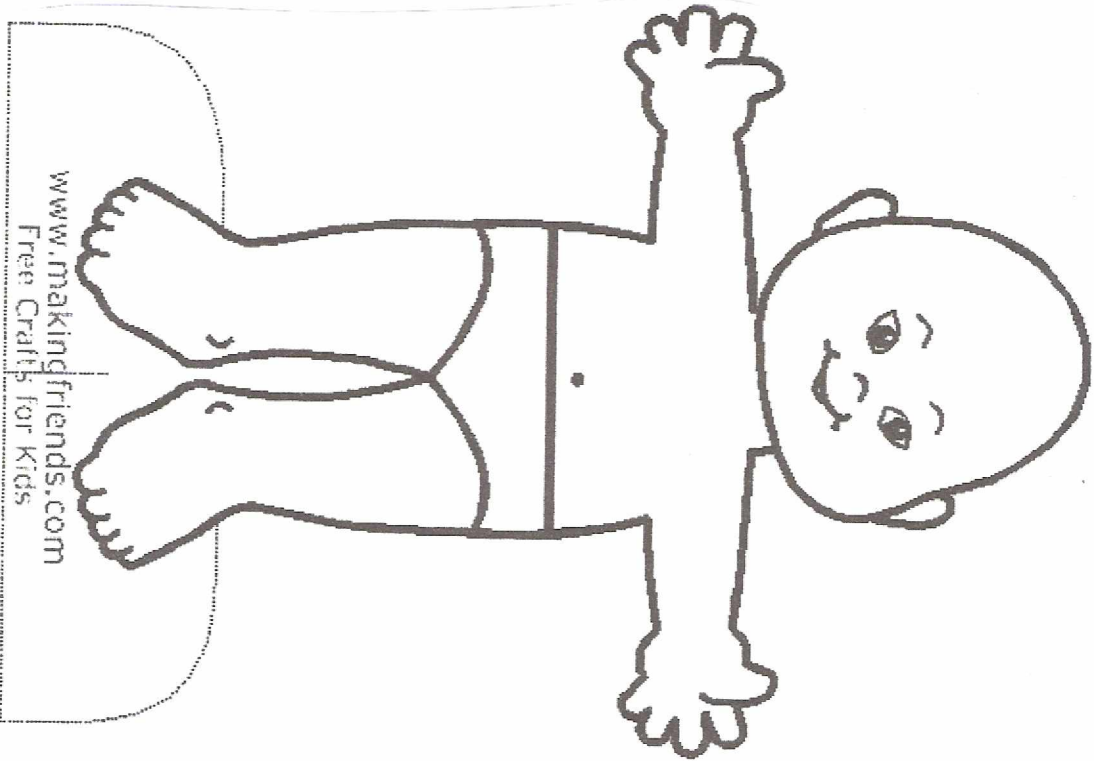
1. Saute the bacon over medium heat in a large skillet; adding the bell peppers and onions when the bacon is almost cooked.

2. Saute, add the rice, stir frequently to prevent from overbrowning.

3. When rice is slightly browned, add the tomato sauce and water.

4. Let come to a boil, cover and simmer on low for 30 -35 minutes.









Pen Pal Card Project

Perhaps your group (or some in your group) would like to begin a pen pal relationship with a Navajo child of similar age. If you are interested in this project, collect the necessary art supplies, and have each student create a card, writing a personal note inside to a child of about his/her own age. Include each child's age, name and mailing address on the back of their card. (You may need to obtain parental permission beforehand.) Mail all cards from your group together to Chris Amberman. She will hand deliver each card to a similar aged Navajo child with whom she is personally involved. If the child chooses to respond, it will be up to them (perhaps with Chris's help) to write back to your child who made the card. In this way, the Navajo children are not simply receiving an impersonal handout of a token gift. They are receiving an invitation into a meaningful relationship that shows real interest in them as a person. If you would like to include a picture, take a group picture of the children who made cards, and send it, with no identifying names, along with the cards. Chris can post the group picture on the bulletin board of the Neighborhood House, and the children's groups that meet there can pray for your group as a whole. If a lasting relationship develops between one of your children and one of the Navajo children, it can be up to the individual families to send pictures or personal information as desired.

Send cards (and picture) to:

*Chris Amberman
P.O. Box 1452
Fruitland, NM 87416*