

# Listening Session and Worship Sharing

Seasoning the NEYM Letter of Apology to Native Americans

## Gathering

*Suggestions: Hold waiting worship; offer a prayer; and/or make a land acknowledgement*

## Video Centering Native Voices & Experience\*

## Reading of the Letter

*15 minutes*

### **NEYM Apology to Native Americans**

To the Algonquian peoples of the Northeast who continue among us: the Abenaki, Mahican, Maliseet, Massachusett, Mi'kmaq, Mohegan, Narragansett, Nipmuck, Passamaquoddy, Pennacook, Penobscot, Pequot, Pocumtuc, Quinnipiac, Tunzis, and Wampanoag,

### **Apology**

As participants in European colonization and as continuing beneficiaries of that colonization, Quakers have participated in a great and continuing injustice. For too long and in too many ways, we as a faith community have failed to honor that of God in you, the original peoples of these lands, and in doing so betrayed that of God in ourselves. We are deeply sorry for the suffering we caused in the past and continue to cause in the present. Today we acknowledge that injustice and apologize.

We acknowledge that Quakers participated in and benefited greatly from the colonization effort which stole your land and displaced your ancestors and caused genocide and sought cultural erasure. We know that the injustice of displacement and disrespect continues. We also see the ways that we continue to benefit from broken treaties and genocidal policies. We have much work to do to attain right relationship.

We are sorry for our advocacy of the “Indian Industrial Boarding Schools” which we now recognize was done with spiritual and cultural arrogance. Quakers were among the strongest promoters of this policy and managed over 30 schools for Indian children, mostly boarding schools, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We are deeply sorry for our part in the vast suffering caused by this system and its effects.

On behalf of New England Quakers, in particular those of us with European ancestry, we offer this apology. We commit to continuing our efforts to learn, to see more clearly the implications of settler colonialism in our own lives, and to work toward right relationship.

We hold ourselves open to suggestions and to dialogue, holding no expectations of you. We will continue to pray for guidance and to seek divine assistance in the transformation we know is needed within each of us, and in the world.

[Signature on approval]

Source: <https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Apology.pdf>

## Breakout Rooms

*15 minutes*

- In triads, speak to the resonance you feel with this as a letter of apology. For now, focus less on the action steps and sit with the acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Each person will have 5 minutes. How does this reflect the process of revealing, surrender, and turning spoken of at NEYM sessions?

## Worship Sharing

*15 minutes*

- Customary settling into waiting worship and speaking once out of the silence.

## Closing Worship

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## \*Suggested Videos

1. (a video of your own creation or selection)
2. *5 minutes*  
Oren Lyons, Onondaga Faith Keeper, speaking on Rights and Responsibilities  
(Part of the Sacred Land Film Project)  
<https://youtu.be/USwPW29W-aY>
3. *17 minutes*  
'We the People' - the three most misunderstood words in US history:  
a TEDx video with Mark Charles (2019)  
<https://youtu.be/HOktqY5wY4A>
4. *18 minutes*  
Native Americans : We Shall Remain | LoVina Louie | TEDxCoeurdalene  
<https://youtu.be/ilf5vDptOYk>