

Ceremonial Objects

The collection of sacred objects can vary widely from person to person according to gender, teachings, responsibilities, gifts, traditional territories of origin, purpose & interest.

Combined together they are called a “Sacred Bundle or Bundle or Medicine Bag or Medicine Bundle”. All are common names in the Great Lakes region.

Often these items are carried in a suitcase, special bag or even a box.

In general there are some common items that one might see laid out on a blanket, cloth, or leather base. All items are considered special, sacred & personal for the individual who carries (brings) them. Often you will hear a statement such as “in my bundle I carry....” This refers to the responsibility of teachings.

Regardless of the composition of individual bundles they are not to be touched by anyone except designated “helper(s)”.

The types of items one would find in most bundles in the Great Lakes Region include: white cedar, white sage, traditional tobacco, braids of sweetgrass (The Four Sacred Medicines), a smudging bowl (shell, cast iron pan, clay pot, plate, stone or ceramic) for burning of above medicines, matches (preferred but some use lighters or flint), a drum, shaker, copper vessel (for water), wooden bowls, leather bags with various contents, traditional pipe, cloth (sometimes referred to as “prints”), stones, bones, seeds, berries (strawberries & blueberries), eagle bone whistles, flutes, fur, beaded items, traditional medicines, birch bark & carvings.

Many of these items are carefully wrapped/unwrapped, some are used and some are present to honour the sacred item itself. These ancestral objects are considered living beings with deep spiritual abilities and physical purpose by the holder of the bundle.

Curiosity abounds in the minds of many as to why certain objects are present or how & why they are used but it is very respectful to refrain from asking questions unless the Carrier of the Bundle chooses to share information. When a bundle is in use by the Carrier it is expected that others will not speak nor ask questions.