

# Reader's Guide



## NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH BOOKTALKS

### *Braiding Sweetgrass*

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

### Reader's Guide

*Recommended for adults*

*Potawatomi plant ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer blends Indigenous knowledge, science, and her love for ecology into a hopeful and warm lyrical non-fiction masterpiece titled Braiding Sweetgrass. She shares Creation stories, cultural lessons, and makes science so much more personable. Her love for nature exudes throughout the book and is an absolute treat for readers.*

Find the book in our catalog here: <https://tinyurl.com/fd3exfrp>

#### More to Explore

Robin Wall Kimmerer Author Page

<https://www.robinwallkimmerer.com/>

Gifts of the Land: A Guided Nature Tour with Robin Wall Kimmerer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxJUFGIPYn4>

Braiding Sweetgrass Discussion Questions

<https://tinyurl.com/mryuxpbe>

Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults Teaching Guide

<https://lernerbooks.com/downloads/468#view/>

#### Discussion Questions

- In her book Kimmerer expressed frustration and anger that her family could not speak the Potawatomi language or use the true names that were lost to them. They were forced to use the language of exiles when offering prayers and ceremonies. As she grew older, she “recognized that the earth drank it up as if it were right. The land knows you, even when you are lost.” What do you think Kimmerer meant by this?
- Kimmerer’s graduate student, Laurie, completed a research project on sweetgrass that was based on Indigenous knowledge. Initially it received pushback from the faculty

committee because it was seen as unscientific and not supported by academia. Why do you think this was the case?

- The Honorable Harvest is explained as the Indigenous principles and practices that focus on reciprocity and sustainability. In what ways can this be applied to other aspects of life?
- Kimmerer mentions that many Native peoples around the world are rooted in cultures of gratitude. They recognize and are thankful for what they are given from nature and the world. Gratitude can be given by offerings, ceremonies, songs, and other forms of recognition. What forms of gratitude do you participate in?
- How did your perspective about plants change after reading *Braiding Sweetgrass*?

### **Read-Alikes**

*Held by the Land* by Leigh Joseph

<https://tinyurl.com/3aau42e7>

*The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben

<https://tinyurl.com/3a6kcrsk>

*Iwígara* by Enrique Salmón

<https://tinyurl.com/687wbsve>

### **Other Resources**

Learn the Potawatomi language!

<http://connect.mangolanguages.com/la-county/start>

*Gather* (Kanopy documentary)

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8sac83>