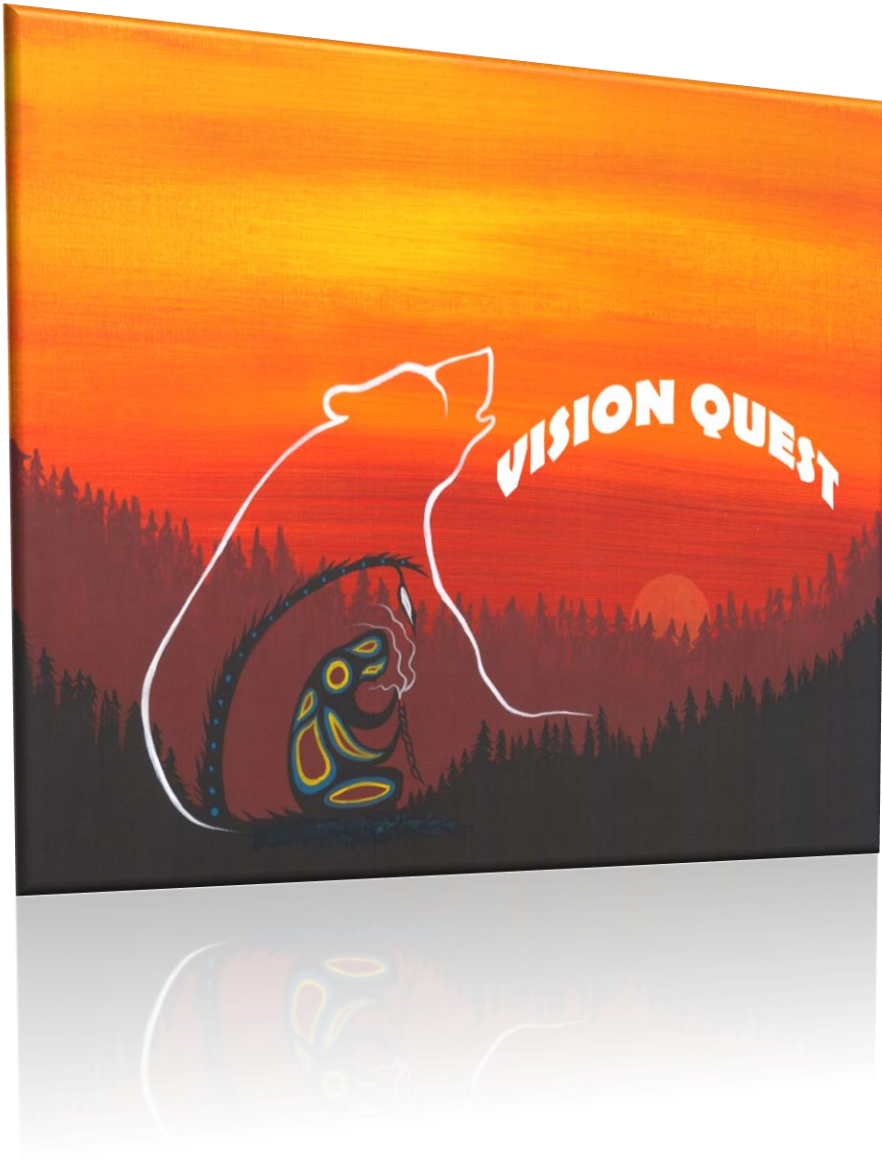


# VISION QUEST – A NEW BEGINNING

## FOR A NEW GENERATION OF MEN

**A Call to be Initiated: Boys aged 12 and Up**  
**TURTLE LODGE, JUNE 1 to 5, 2012**  
*Manitou Api, in the Center of Turtle Island*



**The Turtle Lodge is making a call to all men who yearn for direction and connection to Spirit – who want to find a vision that will define the meaning and purpose of their life.**

**For 5 days in June 2011, men will gather to fast and pray in the heart of Turtle Island in Manitoba. Our first priority is to provide this experience to young boys (12 years old and up) so that they may be properly initiated into manhood.**

the land, seeking a vision and creating an alliance with the natural world. They must be initiated by Mother Earth. In doing so, boys have a path to manhood that is based on respect for women and all life on Earth.

This will be facilitated by being on the land under the direction of Anishnabe Elder, Dave Courchene and other Elders and Mentors. Following ancient protocols that have worked for our people for thousands of years, we will support the emergence of strong men who will be set on a path of learning, love, humility and relationship to Spirit. There will be 1 day of preparation with Elder teachings, sunrise ceremonies, the sweat lodge, the sacred fire, and pilgrimage to the sacred petroforms, followed by 3 days out on the land with no food and no water, to seek a vision. Once they have completed the Vision Quest they will return for a final day to share and celebrate with a feast. Each man will be responsible for his travel and sleeping bag and will make an offering to this event to support the work of this year and following years.

**Contact: [turtlelodge@mts.net](mailto:turtlelodge@mts.net).**

## **VISION QUEST—June 1-5, 2012**

No matter what how disconnected that we are, what challenges we face in life, and whether we are sick or feeling lost, the Elders always say in their great wisdom, "Go back to the beginning." They will ask, "What is your vision?"

**They tell us we need to have a vision that defines our purpose and meaning in life.**

If we hope to survive as strong families then we must create environments where the rites of passage are brought back and taught again. The young boys when they come of age must be taken to the land to seek a vision that comes from Spirit and to be initiated by Mother Earth. **Something is going to happen to the boys when they are out there. They will need to overcome their fears to find themselves – as they dream or have a vision of their purpose in life.**

To the Elders, going back to the beginning is to return to the ceremonies of our people. The sweat lodge is a lodge of cleansing and purification that represents the womb of our mothers. Once you enter you begin to regain the memory of being attached to your mother in her womb. You remember she is the one who created you as a human being. The memory of being attached to our mothers reminds us of her sacredness. All boys must be initiated by woman to become real men. It was the grandmothers of our nations that initiated men in the past. They selected the leaders. Being the life givers they were honoured, respected and protected by the men. The more we find ourselves in the sacred ceremonies of our people the more we

understand the sacredness of the man, and the sacredness of all life.

There are four elements that constitute our nature as human beings: our spirit, emotions, body and mind. The foundation of all life is the Spirit. The essence of all our lives is Spirit. The elders remind us we must turn to Spirit to understand our existence, our purpose. Our spirituality as a people defines who we are, and what our responsibilities are in this world. Our spirituality is connected to the Earth, Mother Earth as we call her.

**As a young boy seeks his vision on a Vision Quest he is initiated by Mother Earth. We are making a call for young boys and men to participate in a Vision Quest to be initiated by the Earth this coming spring. They will be guided into one of our most sacred sites known as *Manitou Api* in the center of the continent. They will be encouraged and watched over daily by the Elders.**

There was a Law that we were recently reminded of that came through ceremony. That Law, spoken in our language as Anishnabe people, was called *Abinoojii Ka kii kwe win*. The closest translation would be: *Teachings that are given to a child that last forever that can only be given by woman.*

If we truly understand that law, we will see and extend that sacred connection to our mothers, our grandmothers, our ancestors, and right to the beginning, to Mother Earth. We are all children of the Earth. All life has been born from the Earth. All teachings that are sacred have come from Mother Earth.

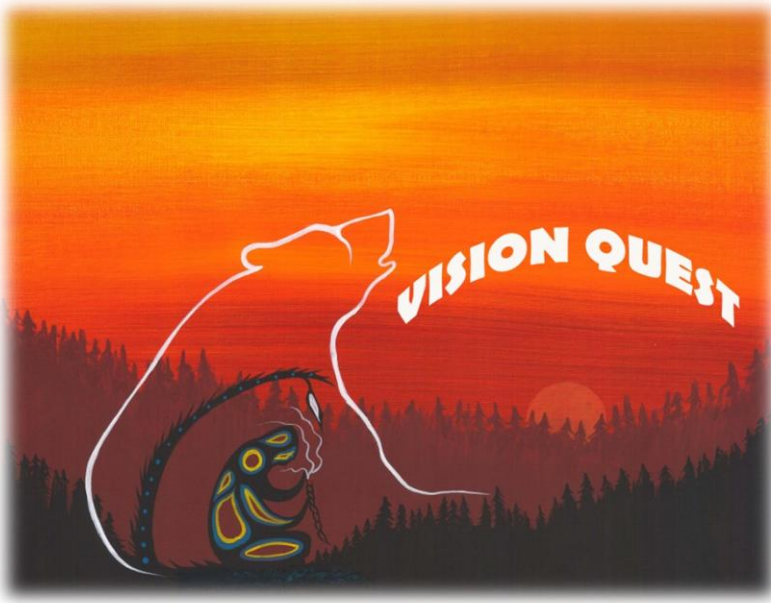
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## INFORMATION PACKAGE

### VISION QUEST

This Information Package is for the Vision Quest, open to boys and men, taking place at Turtle Lodge from June 1 to 5, 2012. Please read through thoroughly before signing up to ensure that you can meet the requirements of the program.



**The Vision Quest** enables men and adolescent boys to engage in an ancient ceremony that assists in the transition from one life stage to the next, with purpose and meaning.

As a young boy seeks his vision on a **Vision Quest** *he is initiated by Mother Earth*. All men must be initiated by Woman to understand life's sacredness. We are making a call for young boys and men to participate in a Vision Quest to be initiated by the Earth this coming spring. They will be encouraged and watched over daily by the Elders.

#### Who Should Come

**Any boys and men ages 12 and over are invited.** We have the ability to accommodate 50 individuals plus their Mentors. Young men will be accommodated on a first come first serve basis. Adult men who have not yet experienced their rites of passage are also invited – a smaller number of places may be reserved for them.

All young men under the age of 18 applying must be accompanied by a male Adult Mentor/Chaperone – e.g. their father, grandfather or care worker. Adult Mentors/Chaperones are expected to stay with the young men for the whole week. Adult Mentor/Chaperone responsibilities are stated below.

#### Deadline

A maximum of 50 boys/men (this number does not include the Adult Mentors/Chaperones) will be accommodated in this spring's program. Please send this form in by March 1, 2012. You will be notified by March 15, 2011 if you have been accepted.

#### Adult Mentors/Chaperones

Each young man under age 18 must be accompanied for the whole 5-DAY long program by a male Adult Mentor/Chaperone. The ideal situation is a young man accompanied by his father or grandfather. If there are many young men in care (e.g. Child & Family Services) applying for their Vision Quest, there needs to be at least

one care worker for every two young men under age 18. Adult Mentors/Chaperones are expected to help the young men during their Vision Quest by maintaining the sacred fires and staying close by. They are expected camp close to the young men at the Turtle Lodge for the first day, and then either camp at the Manitou Api sacred site inside the Whiteshell Provincial Park, or have a cabin close by where they may take turns with other Adult Mentors/Chaperones overnight in watching the sacred fires. Adult Mentors/Chaperones are responsible for making their own accommodation and food arrangements. A list of accommodation in the Whiteshell can be found at <http://ignitingfire.org/gathering.html>.

Adult Mentor/Chaperones are expected to be someone who will commit to the ongoing mentoring of the young person after their Vision Quest. During their Vision Quest they are asked to spend time with the young man to connect with him, so that he will have someone that he can come and talk to throughout the year.

## **Codes of Conduct**

Men will respect the sacredness of the Turtle Lodge and all that enter.

Men will attend all ceremonies, teachings and activities. If they choose not to go into the Sweat Lodge, they can stay at the Sacred Fire.

Men will refrain from drug or alcohol use at least 4 days before and during the gathering.

Men will refrain from profanity.

Men will refrain from intimate relationships during ceremony.

Men will stay on the Turtle Lodge and designated Manitou Api grounds during the whole gathering.

Men will camp outside the Turtle Lodge for the first two nights (need to bring their own tents, sleeping bags) and then will be camping in the sacred site for the rest of the time.

Men will be permitted to use cell phones, blackberries, ipods, etc. during designated hours for the first day only. They will not be permitted to have any electronic or computer devices during their time on the land.

## **What to Bring**

- Any Sacred items that you have and want to bring
- Shorts for Sweat Lodges
- Tobacco for offerings
- Cloth for Tobacco Ties/offerings – minimum 1 m each of red, green, blue and white (i.e. broadcloth)
- Plate, cup, bowl, utensils
- Toilet paper
- Tent, sleeping bag (Men will be camping outside)
- Warm clothes for nighttime, spring-summer wear for daytime
- Toiletries and personal items
- Towels (2) (Showers will be available the last day, plus one towel for Sweat Lodges)
- Pens/pencils & notebook for journaling before or after your Vision Quest
- Your Offering (Donation to help cover costs of Their Vision Quest)
- \*For young men under 18 years of age, Adult Mentor must also camp close to them at the Turtle Lodge Day 1, and either camp or have a cabin close by in the Whiteshell Provincial Park Days 2-5. Adult Mentors are responsible for making their own food and accommodation arrangements, bringing tent, etc.\*



**SIGN UP FORM**

**VISION QUEST**

**ATTENDEE Information**

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ATTENDEE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

AGE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH (YY-MM-DD) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ ALLERGIES \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICAL NUMBERS (e.g. Manitoba Health #/PHIN) \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICAL ISSUES \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: a medical doctor will be on site for the entire duration)

**Adult Mentor/Chaperone Information** (Please fill in only if applicant under 18 years)

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Adult Mentors/Chaperones will be responsible for their own food/accommodation and must camp with the young men at the Turtle Lodge (Day 1 and 2), and either camp at the Manitou Api sacred site inside the Whiteshell Provincial Park or rent a cabin close by to take shifts in watching the sacred fire for the young men. See Information Package for details.

ADULT MENTOR/CHAPERONE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CHAPERONE'S DOB (YY-MM-DD) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE /MOBILE #s \_\_\_\_\_

CHAPERONE ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ ALLERGIES \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICAL NUMBERS (e.g. Manitoba Health #/PHIN) \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICAL ISSUES \_\_\_\_\_

WILL THE ADULT MENTOR/CHAPERONE BE AVAILABLE FOR THE ENTIRE WEEK? (mandatory) \_\_\_\_\_

WILL THE ADULT MENTOR/CHAPERONE BE AVAILABLE TO THE YOUNG MAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR FOR ONGOING MENTORSHIP & SUPPORT? \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendee Question: Why do you want to participate in the Vision Quest?** (May attach more pages)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**If accepted, attendees will be required to provide medical clearance and a signed waiver before entering Their Vision Quest.** (Forms will be provided upon acceptance). Please email sign up form to [turtlelodge@mts.net](mailto:turtlelodge@mts.net), fax to 204-367-1403 or mail to PO Box 1267, Pine Falls, MB R0E 1M0 Canada.

# VISION QUEST 2012

## How to Prepare

The Vision Quest is a sacred decision in a human being's life. You are preparing to make a commitment to learn about yourself, your relationship to Spirit and your responsibilities as a human being.

Below, we have listed recommendations that will assist you in preparing for June 2012. We ask each of you to prepare spiritually, emotionally and physically over the next months.

Although, the Vision Quest is something you do alone, it is also the work of community. You will have support once you arrive at the Turtle Lodge and we ask you to bring a family member or friend to support you throughout your preparations and while you are fasting.

### PREPARATIONS

#### Clarifying Your Intentions

These suggestions will not only prepare you, but it will make your Vision Quest an even more profound experience.

To prepare for June, we ask that you commit to spending more time by yourself, sitting silently in natural outdoor environments - (local parks, wilderness areas, national parks) listen to sounds, sights around you and the feelings/awareness that arise in you. Rather than spend all your time hiking, walk to a spot and sit there for extended periods of time - get to know your mind and heart, when you sit quietly. When you are away from distractions, contemplate your purpose for undertaking this journey.

It is important to be comfortable with being alone for long periods of time, the Vision Quest will challenge you physically and it will also challenge you mentally and spiritually. For the four day Vision Quest, we ask you to bring only what you need to the site: your clothes, tent, tarp, sleeping bag and blanket, toilet paper, prayer ties/robes and bundle, if you have one. This is your time to prayer and listen - no pen or paper, reading or writing materials or listening to music.

To prepare, you may wish to write, to help you focus and clarify your intentions prior to the Vision Quest. Here are some questions you might consider:

- What brings you guidance, clarity, love and strength? How do you call upon this strength?
- What do you wish to call into your life?
- What are you grateful for and what do you wish to celebrate in your life?
- What are your gifts and how do you want to share them with others?
- Who and what do you want to serve?
- Who will benefit from your Vision Quest? Who is your community?

- What can you do to deepen your relationship to Spirit on a daily basis?
- How can you improve your relationships to family, friends, elders and the larger community?
- Are there obstacles (inner and/or outer) which keep you from letting go?
- What are the attachments/habits/addictions in your life and how do they control you?
- Are there beliefs, doubts, fears that hold you back?
- What keeps you from fulfilling your dreams?

### **Spiritual preparations**

Once or more every week, month or season, wake up at sunrise to greet the day, make a prayer of gratitude for your life and relations. If you have received appropriate teachings, make offerings to Ancestors, earth, water, etc.

Begin to prepare your prayer/tobacco ties every so often. For the actual Vision Quest, you will need to make colored prayer ties (approx. 2 inch square ties). These are made with plain colored cotton material (white, red, yellow, black or as you have been instructed). You will hold a pinch of tobacco and pray into that tobacco, then place that tobacco in the middle of the material and tie it off.

By June you should have quite a few ties, which will be strung together and mark the perimeter of where you will be fasting. It is good to begin this process early; with each prayer tie, you can make an offering of gratitude and thanksgiving and also pray for guidance, asking how you can be of service to all your relations. When you are on the Vision Quest, you will be surrounded by your prayers.

As we near June, we suggest creating prayer robes for each of the four directions (these are longer pieces of colored material with a handful of tobacco in each. At the end of the Vision Quest, you will leave your prayer ties at the Manito Api site.

### **Physical preparations**

Gradually begin to eliminate caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, white sugar and sweetened foods from your diet. This will make you healthier, as well as decrease cravings and the side effects of withdrawal during your Vision Quest.

Attempt to drink more water (eight glasses daily) as this will help to remove toxins from your body.

Fast (from food) one day a month (with your physician's permission) from now until January. From February to June (fast one day a week (subject to your physician's permission).

We also suggest that you maintain regular exercise. The Vision Quest requires physical and mental endurance.

### **What to Bring**

Prepare for layered dress conditions. It is often cool in the morning, hot in the afternoon, and cold in the evening/night. Use unscented detergents on your clothes and bring non-perfumed toiletries, as scents will attract bugs.

Small tent

Warm sleeping bag

Waterproof tarp for your tent

Clothes for a variety of weather conditions (warm in day and cooler in evenings, night)

Heavier long pants

Lighter long pants

2 short sleeve t-shirts

A long sleeve t-shirts

Sweatshirt

2 pair thick socks (Socks and Underwear for four days)

Hat

Rain Poncho/Coat

Shoes for hiking/walking

For sweat/purification lodge (Swimsuit or shorts and towel)

Roll of toilet paper

Tooth Brush & Paste

While you are at the Turtle Lodge and Vision Quest sites, we ask you to observe ceremonial protocol. You will have an opportunity to meet other people who are participating in the Vision Quest and Makoose Ka Win and listen to teachings from elders and spiritual leaders and participate in purification (sweat lodge ceremonies). This requires you to be respectful to self and others – not using foul language that may offend others, listening and respecting the teachings of our elders and assisting when you can and when you are asked. If you are not sure about protocol, find an elder or mentor and ask them.

From the time you decide to commit to the Vision Quest until June 2012, we ask you to raise money so you can make an offering to the Turtle Lodge. This helps us purchase food, supplies, transportation for elders, etc. Your help allows others to participate this year and in the future.

When you complete your Vision Quest we will have a feast at the Turtle Lodge. We also suggest that you offer a Thanksgiving Giveaway Feast/Ceremony in your community, to share your gratitude with your family and friends.

We are expecting many participants for this year's Vision Quest. If you are interested, please fill out and submit the accompanying forms.