



SANT BANI SCHOOL

Middle School Summer Reading - 2026

Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants

Overview

Middle Schoolers - you will read one book together this summer - *Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, adapted by Monique Gray Smith. The themes from this book will be closely linked to activities during Camp Bani and within classes across the year. Copies of the book are available on campus to borrow, many public libraries have copies or can find them for you through inter-library loan, you can find it on Audible, or you can purchase the book for students to keep throughout the year.

Directions

Each chapter in this book presents you, the reader, with the concepts of reciprocity, gratitude, science, and indigenous knowledge. The focus this summer is to highlight key takeaways, identify questions you have, and connect the concepts to stories from your own Sant Bani experience. We suggest chunking up the book based on your summer schedule. (Maybe read more one week when you're home more, and give yourself a break when you are on a vacation). Develop a goal for each week and keep track of the reading log. Each chapter has its own reflective questions. You don't need to answer those in your reading log, but we encourage you to think about them. We have also provided resources to help you understand new concepts and vocabulary.

1. Find the book format of choice that will work best for you. (For example, if you spend a lot of time in a car, maybe the audiobook is a good option. Or if your schedule can accommodate reading time throughout the week, having a physical book in hand can be helpful.)
2. Set up a reading log to reflect on each chapter. This log can be in a notebook, sketchbook, or on loose-leaf paper. Your responses can be written or a combination of writing and labeled drawings/sketches. Each entry in your reading log must include:
 - The date
 - The chapter title
 - Numbered responses
3. These are the prompts you must respond to after reading each chapter:
 1. What is something that was interesting or stood out to you in this chapter?
 2. What question or questions do you have about this chapter?
 3. How do or could concepts from this chapter connect to your experience at Sant Bani School?

Example Reading Log (Note: you do not need to rewrite the response prompts; just number your responses!)

Date: September 12, 2026

Chapter: Skywoman Falling

1. What is something that was interesting or stood out to you in this chapter?

I thought it was interesting that Skywoman did not create the Earth by herself. The animals worked together to help her by diving underwater to bring up mud. Even though some animals were not successful, they kept trying. Muskrat was small and not the strongest animal, but he was the one who finally succeeded. This stood out to me because it shows that everyone has something important to contribute.

2. What question or questions do you have about this chapter?

Why are there different creation stories in different cultures?
Is this story still told by indigenous peoples today?

3. How do or could concepts from this chapter connect to your experience at Sant Bani School?

This chapter connects to Sant Bani School because we often talk about kindness, community, and helping one another. In the story, the animals worked together to solve a problem, and each animal's effort mattered. At Sant Bani, we work together on projects, service activities, and in our classrooms. The story also reminds me of how we learn to respect nature and see ourselves as connected to the Earth instead of separate from it.

Resources

- Audio versions are available for free on [Libby](#) and [Hoopla](#), and can be accessed with Spotify Premium on Spotify
- This [Teaching Guide](#) has a nice overview of concepts and can help families process the content of the book together.
- Stay tuned for more information on an in-person summer reading book club hosted by Meghan on campus.

If you have any questions, reach out to Meghan (mschaffer@santbani.org) or Jess (jboynton@santbani.org). Have a wonderful summer filled with connection, exploration, and recharging.