



RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS

RACE TO THE SUN



EVENT KIT

GETTING READY TO CELEBRATE

RACE TO THE SUN

DECOR

To prepare for your event celebrating the arrival of *Race to the Sun*, introduce the atmosphere of the rugged and beautiful natural landscapes of the Navajo Nation to event attendees. Backdrops of desert outlines with the natural flora and fauna of the Southwest are sure to help set the tone. Vibrant cacti and even snow-topped mountain ranges similar to the imagery captured on the *Race to the Sun* cover will get attendees into the

spirit of the journey Nizhoni Begay; her brother, Mac; and her best friend, Davery, take in this epic adventure. Use butcher paper to create your backdrops; layer and scrunch up paper to add to the scene with three-dimensional profiles of the other important elements of the novel, such as Mr. Yazzie, Nazhoni's beloved stuffed horned toad that magically comes to life as an advisor to the trio.

FOODS

For the Navajo, food isn't simply just about eating or nourishment; it's also an opportunity for families and the larger community to come together for kinship and celebration. Historically, as they were farming people, the Navajo diet often largely consisted of corn, beans, and other foods grown from their land, as well as nuts, fruits, and herbs. Today, while diets are more diverse, staples still include corn and wheat-based meals. While preparing *Race to the Sun* snacks for partygoers, offer creative treats inspired by the novel—yellow sun-shaped cookies, “cactus arms” (celery sticks), “cactus flowers” (slices of red peppers or tomatoes plated in creative designs)—or that give a nod to the staple foods of the Navajo people and culture by including snacks such as popcorn, and corn chips served with bean dips, all to be washed down with nature's greatest drink,

pure water or iced tea and sun-yellow lemonade. For an even more exciting and authentic culinary experience, solicit help in preparing frybread treats for your event attendees (authentic recipes can be found online).



ICE BREAKER: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

CREATE A NAME INTRODUCTION PLAQUE

In *Race to the Sun*, readers learn that Nizhoni's name means "beauty" in the Diné, or Navajo, language. Can you think of any ways in which being given such a

name might be challenging to live with? What are the benefits? Place party participants in small groups and allow them to discuss the following questions:

1. Did someone in particular name you, and do you know why you were given your name?
2. What do you personally think of your name? What hopes and dreams does your name hold for the people who gave you your name?
3. Do you know anyone with the same name? Is it an easy name to pronounce? Is it difficult?
4. Are you the only one in your school with this name? If so, how does this make you feel?
5. Have you ever heard or witnessed someone being teased because of their name? If you have, what did you do about it or what could you do in the future if it happened again?

At the conclusion of this activity, allow attendees to share something they enjoyed learning about another person's name with the larger group. After finishing

the discussion and sharing, provide cardstock and art supplies that can be folded to create and design a name plate or plaque.

CRAFTS AND ACTIVITIES TO GET THE CELEBRATION STARTED!

Navajo people continue to produce some of the finest art in America. They use a variety of materials: jewelry made of natural stones like turquoise with natural metals, woven rugs and tapestries, pottery, baskets,

and sand paintings. To get readers excited about *Race to the Sun* and their introduction to Navajo mythology, culture, and lore, consider the following craft projects or stations for your event.

PLAYING WITH POTTERY

The Navajo are known for creating beautiful pottery that is both simple in design and utilitarian in purpose. While traditional pottery created by the Navajo had little design or none at all, today design elements of Navajo pottery can vary greatly, with some design elements only featured in pieces for ceremonial use. Begin by sharing images of Navajo pots and discuss common elements and uses for these vessels. Next, give each participant an easy-to-use and fast-hardening clay. Rather than limiting their design to pots only, allow them to create a small clay piece of poetry with their hands. Provide additional artistic tools for carving

and color, and remind them that, like the artistic work of the Navajo, their sculpted project of choice can be crafted to be both functional and ornamental or it can just be something whimsical and fun.





JEWELRY-MAKING STATION

Navajo jewelry continues to be known for its bold and distinctive designs, as well as its use of precious metals like silver with inlaid natural stones such as turquoise. Create and set up a jewelry-making station for your *Race to the Sun* partygoers. Discuss the novel's most

important themes and allow readers to consider those before they get to work on creating a *Race to the Sun*-inspired piece of commemorative jewelry or a charm. After participants have finished their craft, ask for volunteers to show off their handiwork.

WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR? YOUR SYMBOLS T-SHIRT DESIGN

In *Race to the Sun*, readers discover that Nizhoni must search for her inner strength to fight for what matters most to her. Whether fighting to save her family, the land she loves, and even herself, Nizhoni finds the strength to persevere and become the hero she is destined to be. For your event attendees, set up a T-shirt decorating station with paints and other art supplies, as well as inexpensive shirts. Next, put them into small groups and ask them to discuss what have been their biggest challenges they've faced so far in life.

Examples might include losing a pet, changing schools, or finding new friends. After considering those things, have them think about what are the things in their personal lives that are most important—what are they willing to fight or stand their ground for? Lead another discussion about what pictures and symbols represent, and after the discussion, ask them to think more personally about what messages or symbols make them feel empowered and courageous. Remind them symbols can be artistic but they can also highlight singular words that are important to them—have them consider the following: Why is this symbol meaning to you, and how do you think it will inspire you as you move forward to face life's challenges?

Allow event attendees to work their way through the T-shirt station, creating an original T-shirt that captures what matters most to them.



PASS-TIME PASTIMES!

Basketball is a beloved sport and pastime in many Native communities, and in *Race to the Sun*, Nizhoni and Davery's school (the Intertribal Community Charter School), the competition is fierce. Get your party attendees up and moving and practicing their passing skills with some hoop playtime with a twist. Begin by placing the event participants into relay teams. Using smaller, soft or inflatable basketballs that are available

online for purchase provide each team with a basketball. Next, if the event is indoors, have attendees stretch themselves out on the ground in a line where the ball can be passed from hands to feet to hands to feet as the inflatable ball is moved from teammate to teammate. Once it gets to the end, have the final person pass it back to the beginning. The first team to return their basketball across the "court" and back wins!

DESIGN A MAGICAL WEAPON

Besides their inherent gifts, Nizhoni, Mac, and Davery journey to the Sun to retrieve the weapons they'll need to fight and defeat the monsters set loose on them and the world at large. These objects offer them protection and enhancements in their ability to battle and protect themselves and each other. Ask event attendees the

following question: If you could design a clever, only-to-be-used-by-you magical object or weapon, what would it be? After offering time for brainstorming, provide craft supplies to allow them to design their own object, being sure to note all the traits of the object. Make sure they address the following:

1. What does it look like?
2. What can it do?
3. Why do you find this useful?
4. Are there any ways this object might prove itself not useful?

After designing and decorating their imagined weapon, allow readers to share their creations with each other.





TRUTH OR MYTH/FACT OR FICTION

Just like Nizhoni, Mac, and Davery's adventures traveling through the Glittering World on their way to collect weapons from the Sun that will allow them to fight the unleashed monsters, learning and discerning what's fact and fiction about Navajo history, culture,

and mythology will make the reading of *Race to the Sun* an even greater epic adventure. Working together, ask readers to decide—is this Navajo mythology and history TRUTH or MYTH?

1. The Navajo Nation is located in an area in the Americas known as the Four Corners. **(TRUTH)**
2. The legend of the Navajo Spider Woman is part of the Marvel universe. **(MYTH)**
ANSWER: The myth of the Navajo Spider Woman is that she serves as an advisor of the heroic twins Monsterslayer and Born for Water, as well as teacher to mankind by sharing the arts of weaving and agriculture. She also is believed to help and protect the innocent and restore the world's harmony.
3. Natural stones such as turquoise are considered incredibly powerful elements to the Navajo people. **(TRUTH)**
4. The Rock Crystal Boy sparkles, as he's made of diamonds and serves as guardian of the mountain since the beginning of time. **(TRUTH)**
5. The Navajo are known for their many artistic contributions. **(TRUTH)**
6. Born to the Changing Woman, the legend of the Hero Twins reveals them to be born and trained as monsterslayers. **(TRUTH)**
7. Like other world myths, Navajo mythology includes creation myths to explain how the wonders of the world came to be. **(TRUTH)**
8. In Navajo mythology and culture, care for the natural world is of no consequence. **(MYTH)**
ANSWER: A reverence and respect for the land is essential component of Navajo religion and culture.
9. For the Navajo, sand paintings are primarily created for school projects. **(MYTH)**
ANSWER: The Navajo create sand paintings for ceremonial purposes often centering around healing.
10. Thinking, persistence, bravery, patience, and reverence are all valued traits of the Navajo. **(TRUTH)**

RACE TO THE SUN WORD SCRAMBLE

Put your puzzle-solving skills to the test with our *Race to the Sun* word scramble. Look carefully at the jumbled words and try unscrambling as many of these novel-related words as you can.

- INIONHZ _____
- IDESPR NAWMO _____
- EHRO IWNST _____
- YRAFREDB _____
- ACBLK ANINTMUO _____
- NHDREO AODT _____
- HNNICGGA WMAON _____
- AJAONV HYLO ELPOEP _____
- RESONMTRSRLAYE _____
- NOBR FRO ATEWR _____
- OOCPTETRR _____
- UOHES FO TEH UNS _____
- ARNOIBW ORAD _____
- THO HTECESO _____
- ASPEH FTESHRI _____
- ELMRISSEC EON _____
- GINKATL OTNSE _____
- M.R IAZEZY _____
- YRVAED _____
- MCA _____



INIONHZ-NIZHONI
 IDESPR NAWMO-SPIDER WOMAN
 EHRO IWNST-HERO TWINS
 YRAFREDB-FRYBRAD
 ACBLK ANINTMUO-BLACK MOUNTAIN
 NHDREO AODT-HORNED TOAD
 HNNICGGA WMAON-CHANGING WOMAN
 AJAONV HYLO ELPOEP-NAVAJO HOLY PEOPLE
 RESONMTRSRLAYE-MONSTERSLAYER
 NOBR FRO ATEWR-BORN FOR WATER
 OOCPTETRR-PROTECTORS
 UOHES FO TEH UNS-HOUSE OF THE SUN
 M.R IAZEZY-MR. YAZZIE
 YRVAED-DAVERY
 MCA-MAC
 THO HTECESO-HOT CHEETOS