

*Australia
Dreamtime
from
Mystic Lands Series*

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MYSTIC LANDS Grades 9-12

SERIES INTRODUCTION

Mystic Lands, a 13-part documentary series, takes the viewers on an incomparable journey of discovery to some of the world's most unique spiritual places. From the cloud-shrouded majesty of Peru's Machu Picchu to the pagoda-studded plains of Myanmar's Bagan, and from the architectural grandeur of India's Taj Mahal to the simplicity of a rural Haitian village's vodou hounfor (temple), **Mystic Lands** explores the allure of these sacred spaces and vividly documents their continued powerful influence on the daily lives of countless believers. The **Mystic Lands** series, in its artistic blending of the past and present, details the legends, mysteries, history, and facts that surround these great spirit lands of the world. Intended for grades 9-12, the series highlights the "living faith" embodied in the architecture, expressive arts, contemporary spiritual practices, lifestyle, people, and cultures that surround these spiritual sites today.

Through worldwide, on-location, live-action video, original illustrations, maps, excerpts and translations of sacred writings and oral traditions, as well as interview footage, **Mystic Lands** acquaints the viewers with the world's "sacred geography," identifying the mystical sites, temples, holy cities, places of pilgrimage, prophets, gods and beliefs that have molded the world's diverse spiritual traditions. **Mystic Lands** is narrated by acclaimed actor Edward James Olmos and features original music by international recording artist Chris Spheeris.

Programs in this series are ideal for use in multi-cultural studies. Viewers will gain an appreciation for cultural diversity and become more globally conscious through learning about religious differences, how other societies relate to the natural world, and lifestyles totally different than their own.

Titles in the series include:

Anasazi - The Ancient Ones

The mysteries of the Anasazi culture from America's southwest desert unfold through their myths and legends. Sunbaked ruins, broken pottery sherds, elaborate road systems, ceremonial great houses and kivas weave an amazing tale of the spiritual life of this great Native-American culture.

Australia - Dreamtime

The legends, ceremonies, songs, dances, sacred beliefs, and aspects of everyday life of Australia's indigenous Aboriginal Anangu and Tiwi tribes are explored. These native people see the landscape as a living embodiment of the myths and stories of their creation—an age of legendary heroes called “the Dreamtime.”

Bali - Island Of A Thousand Temples

On the magical island paradise of Bali, religion and spirits blend themselves into all aspects of Balinese life. The Balinese spiritual beliefs are richly expressed through their arts. Delicate weavings, intricate carvings, vivid paintings and imaginative dances are an integral part of Balinese life.

Bhutan - Land Of The Thunder Dragon

In this secluded Himalayan Kingdom, Buddhism is not just a religion; it is a way of life. From fluttering prayer flags to the rhythmic spin of prayer wheels, worship to Lord Buddha permeates every aspect of life in Bhutan.

Burma - Triumph Of The Spirit

Burma (Myanmar) is a devout Buddhist nation struggling to find its way in today's post-industrial world. This reclusive country, graced by golden pagodas and teak temples, is considered one of the last magical destinations in the Orient. The spiritual life of Burma is explored through its historic religious sites.

Egypt - Cycle Of Life

Rising from the windswept desert sands along the banks of the life-giving Nile, the great pyramids of Egypt rise to the heavens—eternal monuments in stone to the pharaohs' quest for immortality. This program delves into the complex culture of Ancient Egypt and its rich spiritual traditions.

Greece - Isle Of Revelation

From the majestic Athenian Acropolis to the cloud-shrouded top of Mount Olympus, Greek ruins dot an epic landscape. Greece was once home to a powerful pantheon of gods, but a new religion, a legacy of the historic visits of the Christian disciples John and Paul, shattered the old myths and still shapes the faith of Greece today.

Haiti - Dance Of The Spirit

Dispelling the myths and preconceptions that surround the practice of Vodou, this provocative episode dramatically explores the truth and beauty of mystical Haitian Vodou spirituality through fantastic dance and fire ceremonies.

Jerusalem - Mosaic Of Faith

Claimed by three living religions, Jerusalem is perhaps the most spiritually charged city in the world. The historic and mystic roots of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism unfold in an exploration of this ancient city of faith.

Maya - Messages In Stone

The mysterious cities of the Maya—Tikal, Chichen Itza, and Palenque—are explored, focusing on the legends, history and facts derived from the “rock records” left by the ancient Maya. Human sacrifice is explained through Maya religious beliefs.

Peru - Kingdom In The Clouds

Considered to be the most significant archaeological site on the South American continent, Machu Picchu was built and then abandoned by the Inca after only 100 years. The influence of the Inca spiritual beliefs on their lifestyle, architecture and astronomical achievements will be explored in the ruins of Machu Picchu and the spiritual centers of Peru’s Sacred Valley, including Ollantaytambo and Pisac.

Taj Mahal - Heaven On Earth

Located in Agra, India, the Taj Mahal is a complex of gardens, mosques, and minarets constructed as a tribute to Shah Jahan’s wife, Mumtaz Mahal, after her death. In his grief, Shah Jahan vowed to build the most beautiful tomb that ever existed. The spiritual motivations behind the building of the Taj Mahal and the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri are highlighted.

Varanasi - City Of Light

Located on the banks of India’s great river Ganges, Varanasi is considered by Hindus to be the holiest place on earth. The eternal city of Varanasi has been a center of enlightenment and civilization for more than 2,000 years. The spiritual and cultural aspects of the Hindu faith continue to define this sacred city. Rituals and beliefs surrounding death by cremation and the end of the cycle of reincarnation are explored.

Each program in the **Mystic Lands** series includes one video, the average length is approximately 25 minutes; a Teacher's Guide with lesson plans, suggested student activities, Internet listings, and script; and a set of reproducible blackline masters for classroom use.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

It is suggested that you preview the video and review this teacher's guide before involving your students in the lesson activities. In this way you will become familiar with the materials and be better prepared to adapt them to the needs of your students. You may find it necessary to make some changes, deletions or additions to fit the specific needs of your class. We encourage you to do so, for only by tailoring this program to your students will they obtain the maximum benefits afforded by the materials.

It is also suggested that the video presentation take place before the entire group under your supervision. The lesson activities grow out of the content of the video; therefore, the presentation should be a common experience for all students.

AUSTRALIA - Dreamtime **From the Mystic Lands Series**

Viewing Time: 25 Minutes

Grade Level: 9-12

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Aborigine people of Australia have formed a sustaining, spiritual bond with the land. It is a sacred link, birthed in myth and legend, honored in mystical rites and exotic ceremonies, and renewed in the activities of daily life.

The Aborigines consider themselves descendants of the tjukurapa (dream) time people. According to their traditions, in the mythical period of the beginning, known as Dreamtime, ancestral beings with supernatural powers roamed the earth, creating all the features of the land and all creatures that inhabit it. When the work of creation was complete, some of the Spirit Ancestors returned to the earth leaving behind images of their physical forms in the rocks and boulders that define this unique landscape, thus creating the sacred geography of the Anangu and Tiwi--Uluru, Kata Tjuta, and the Tiwi islands of Melville and Bathurst.

The paths the Spirit Ancestors took on their journeys are called Dreaming tracks or songlines. Following these tracks, telling the ancient stories, and singing the ancestral songs enables the Aborigines to enter into the world of the Dreaming and become as one with the Spirit Ancestors and the landscape. For the Aborigines, Dreaming is not just the act of primordial creation, it is also, and most significantly, an eternal dimension of time continuous with the present.

Uluru is the great spirit land of the Aborigines. It is located in Australia's Northern Territory, in a region called Red Center due to its iron-rich badlands. The world's largest monolith, Uluru, 5-1/2 miles in circumference, reaches 1,143 feet towards the heavens. The Anangu settled near Uluru deriving sustenance and nourishment from the water and vegetation found at its base. In the cliffs and gullies of their sacred Uluru, the Anangu see written a record of Dreamtime stories that express the mythological history and beliefs of their ancient religion.

The cultural life of the Aborigines is highly sophisticated. Ceremonies which depict ancestral activities are integrated with religion, history, law, and art. Rituals establish codes of behavior for the care of the land.

In this program, shot on location in Australia's Red Center and the Northern Australia islands of Melville and Bathurst, Australia's Aborigine sacred Dreamtime culture is highlighted. Dreamtime legends, ceremonies, and spiritual beliefs are explored through the haunting music, expressive dance, dramatic art, and mythic storytelling of contemporary Anangu and Tiwi peoples.

PROGRAM GOALS

The overall goals of this program are to...

- Provide an introduction to the Dreamtime culture of the Australian Aborigines highlighting the unique nature of Dreamtime legends, rituals, art, song, dance, and music.
- Document how Dreamtime spiritual beliefs and practices influence the everyday lives of the contemporary Aborigine Anangu and Tiwi peoples.

USES OF THE PROGRAM

This program can be used in a variety of ways and in different courses of study. The lesson activities focus on the following:

Cultural Studies
Religion
Geography
History

A thematic approach is suggested, but not required, in order to achieve the student objectives and thereby accomplish the program goals.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing *Australia - Dreamtime* and participating in the lesson activities, the viewers should be able to...

- Locate on a map, describe physical features, and explain the importance of Uluru for the Anangu.
- Discuss the bond that exists between the Aborigines and the land, and explain how that bond is reinforced by Dreamtime laws.

- Describe the Pukamani poles and ceremony and explain how Tiwi spiritual beliefs are reflected in this sacred art and ritual.
- Discuss how Dreamtime spiritual beliefs are expressed through storytelling, creative arts, and ritual ceremonies of song and dance.
- Describe the Dreamtime creation legend and explain its significance to present-day Aborigines.

INTRODUCING THE VIDEO/BLACKLINE MASTERS

- **Map Activity:** On a large wall map point out Australia. Locate Australia's Northern Territory and the islands of Melville and Bathurst off the northern coast, near the city of Darwin. The Northern Territory is bounded on the north by the Timor Sea, the Arafura Sea, and the Gulf of Carpentaria; on the east by Queensland; on the south by South Australia; and on the west by western Australia. If possible point out the location of Uluru (Ayers Rock) which is located in Uluru National Park, south and west of Alice Springs.
- Before viewing the video, ask a few leading questions. For example:
 - What do you already know about Australian Aborigine history, religion, creative arts, culture, and/or lifestyle?
 - How might learning about a society's spiritual beliefs and practices make a difference in developing an understanding of its culture?
 - Why do you think historically, and fairly universally, indigenous native populations were dismissed by early nonnative explorers and settlers as "barbarians" and "savages"? Why did it take so long to recognize the complexity and richness of their cultural lives?
 - Without a written language, how were a people's history and traditions passed on and preserved?
 - Why do you think myths and legends have evolved in different cultures and what purpose might they have served?

Distribute Blackline Master 1, **Vocabulary Guide**. This will help acquaint viewers with some of the unusual terminology used in the vid-

eotape presentation. It is suggested that this list be duplicated and distributed before viewing the program.

Distribute **Blackline Master 2, Viewer's Guide**. It is recommended that you duplicate and distribute this before viewing the program. Some questions may require additional reading. Have viewers answer the questions either while watching the video or shortly after the video presentation. You may want to divide the group into smaller units, assign each group certain questions, and share answers with the entire group.

Present the video. The viewing time is 25 minutes.

Blackline Master 3, Word Match, tests student comprehension of the terms presented in the video and on **Blackline Master 1**.

Blackline Master 4, Quiz. This quiz may be taken immediately following the video or at a later date after viewers have participated in other follow-up activities. The quiz is a brief check on what the viewers have retained from this lesson.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Immediately after viewing the video, ask for questions and comments about the content of the video.

Use **Blackline Master 2, Viewer's Guide**, as a basis for a discussion of the information presented in the video. If the discussion leads to details that were not covered in the video, you may want to have the students or groups of students research the subject and report back to the class. An answer key for the **Viewer's Guide** is provided, beginning on page 11 of this guide.

Some additional suggested discussion questions are...

1. For the Aborigines, is Dreamtime anything more than their creation myth?

Answer: Absolutely. It is a creation myth, but of even greater importance in the lives of the present-day Aborigines, it is the realm in which the spirits still exist. The Aborigines believe that by acting as careful stewards of the land they are able to enter into a mystical communion with their Spirit Ancestors. So Dreamtime is not just mythical legend, but ongoing spiritual reality for the Aborigines. It is an eternal dimension of time continuous with the present.

2. The Tiwi mark the passage from life to death with their very sacred Pukamani ceremony. What do we know of the Anangu funeral rituals?

Answer: We know little about the actual ceremonies of the Anangu for they are kept secret. We do know that the Anangu believe that they must die near the place of their birth, near the site of their Dreaming. They will travel great distances to return to the places where their Spirit Ancestors reside.

3. The moral code of Dreamtime requires that the natural world be protected and guarded by the Aborigines. Does your society share a similar environmental ethic? Compare and contrast your society's environmental code to that of Dreamtime.

Answers will vary.

4. What is a taboo? Are there any examples of this custom in the traditions of the Anangu or Tiwi? Can you think of any examples from your own or other spiritual traditions?

Answers will vary. Emphasize that a taboo is a prohibition excluding something from use, approach or mention because of its sacred or inviolable nature. There are examples of this practice among the Anangu. Kata Tjuta is such a sacred Dreaming place for the Anangu that they are prohibited from speaking about it. The Anangu also keep their mystical ceremonies a secret to all but the initiated. This custom exists among many different groups including Native American, African tribal, and Polynesian societies. This custom also appeared in some religious practices of the Romans, Greeks and Jews.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

1. You may choose to assign individuals or groups to research and prepare written or oral reports on the following topics:

- Uluru (Ayers Rock) - description, geology, legends, and or/spiritual significance.
- Australia's Northern Territory.
- Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) - description, geology, legends, and or spiritual significance.
- Dreaming tracks or songlines - the paths the Spirit Ancestors took when they journeyed across the land.
- Aboriginal music and musical instruments - didgeridoos (wind instrument).

Work with the school librarian. Have him/her pull books and other resource materials related to different aspects of the culture, history, religion, and/or customs of the Aborigines of Australia. If possible have

the materials available in your classroom. Distribute a list of materials available through the school library/media center.

3. Have the students create their own interpretations of Tiwi Pukamani poles. Display finished poles in the classroom or special display case.
4. Totems - the link between the Aborigines and the Spirit Ancestors are totems, each person has their own totem or dreaming. These totems can take many different forms such as snakes, caterpillars, fish and birds. Have the students create their own "totem" and share its symbolism with the class.
5. Break the group into smaller units and have each group prepare an oral presentation and visual display on a different aspect of Aborigine expressive and creative arts, such as dance, song, painting, and rock art.
6. Have students write their own Dreamtime creation legend.

EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

You may choose to assign individuals or groups to research and prepare written or oral reports on the following topics:

- Aboriginal Art - paintings, batik, wood carving, pottery, and/or bark paintings.
- Effect of outside influences on the traditional lifestyles of Australia's Aborigines.
- Dreamtime creation legend. Additionally, compare and contrast to the creation legend of another culture.
- Aborigine walkabout - this is a journey that must be taken alone - a "pilgrimage to the wilder, natural self." Compare to the vision quest practice of some Native American tribes.
- The Rock Art of Australia. Additionally, you could have the students compare and contrast it to the rock art found in other countries such as the cave paintings of Lascaux, France and Altamira, Spain.
- The history and politics of Aboriginal Land Rights.

INTERNET ACTIVITIES

1. Access the alphabetical listing for Australia in the **World Factbook** at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/95fact/index.html>
This website lists facts about the country's geography, people, government, economy, transportation, communication, defense forces, and a

map. Discuss the differences between this country and others around the world. How do the country's features contribute to its position within the world economy? Given the background that was in the video, how does the country's spirituality contribute to its overall character?

2. Visit Just the Facts about Australia at <http://www.about-australia.com/facts.htm>

Use the facts provided by the link to The Changing Nation and Cultural Growth to examine how Australia is adapting to pressures presented in the modern world. How does the struggle of Australia compare to the struggle of the United States to become a multi-cultural country tolerant and encouraging of diversity?

3. Go to The Aboriginal Page at <http://rubens.anu.edu.au/student.projects/tools/koori.html>

Contrast what the life of Australian Aboriginals might have been like before the white man settled the country and what is has been like since. How does this history mirror the history of the American Indians in the United States? How is the spiritual history of the Aboriginals reflected in their culture today?

ANSWER KEY

Blackline Master 2, Viewer's Guide

1. Australia's Aborigine tribes are spiritually bound together by what legend?

Answer: They are all spiritually bound by the legends of Dreamtime – the time they all know as the age of creation.

2. What is the Dreamtime legend of creation?

Answer: According to legend, in the beginning the world was lifeless, flat and without features. The Spirit Ancestors emerged from under the earth and explored the barren landscape. As they traveled they brought into existence all the features of the land and the creatures to inhabit it. When the process of creation was complete, some of the Spirit Ancestors went back into the earth. Images of their physical forms were left behind in the shapes of the rocks or as etchings on rock surfaces. Other Spirit Ancestors stayed in this world and became actual features in the landscape.

3. What do the Aborigines believe about their ancestors' spirits?

Answer: They believe that they are the direct descendants of the Spirit Ancestors and that all inanimate objects and all living things are inhabited by their ancestor's spirits.

4. What is the essence of Dreamtime?

Answer: To the Aborigines' Dreamtime is not just a creation myth, it is a realm in which spirits still exist.

5. What is Ayers Rock? What is its Aborigine name?

Answer: Ayers Rock is a huge monolith that is two miles long and five miles in circumference. It reaches a height of over 1,000 feet. It is so large that it actually creates its own weather due to the effect it has on the surrounding temperature and air currents. The Aborigines call Ayers Rock Uluru, which means the Great Pebble.

6. How does abiding by Dreamtime laws help contemporary Aborigines?

Answer: They feel that by caring for the natural world around them and by abiding by the Dreamtime laws the Spirit Ancestors will give them the sacred knowledge they need for survival. They know how to carve tools, hunt animals, when to harvest, and how to thresh because of the knowledge imparted through Dreamtime.

7. Why do the Aborigines continue to reenact their ancestral Dreamtime stories?

Answer: They reenact the stories as part of their spirit life. They believe reenacting the stories helps ensure the continuation of their traditional ways and also the continuation of all species.

8. How is the story of the battle between the Kuniya and Luri recorded?

Answer: The Aborigines believe that story is recorded on the features of Uluru. Deep ridges on the side of the rock are the tracks made by the snakes. The potholes in the face of the cliffs are spear marks. The stream that feeds into a waterhole is the blood of one of the snakes.

9. What taboo surrounds Kata Tjuta?

Answer: It is such a sacred dreaming site that it is not supposed to be talked about to outsiders. The Aborigines believe that the myths that reside at Kata Tjuta are so powerful that to reveal them would be a sacrilege. At one time revealing the secrets of Kata Tjuta was a crime punishable by death.

10. How do the Tiwi believe their islands were created?

Answer: They believe that their islands were created by Mudungkala. As she crawled across the featureless landscape, sea water filled the imprints made by her body and formed the channels between the islands.

11. What are the Pukamani poles? What is their importance and when are they used?

Answer: They are special burial poles used around Tiwi grave sites. They are used to remember the deceased. They also serve to protect the spirit of the dead, as well as the spirits of those left behind. The poles are the focus of the Pukamani ceremony – the story of how Death descended upon this world.

12. What is the Aborigine relationship with the land ?

Answer: They have formed a bond with the land that sustains them today just as it once did their ancestors. They have a spiritual link with the land that is based on their ancestral myths and their traditional rites and ceremonies. They do not believe that they own the land, but rather the land owns them. They believe that by renewing and maintaining the land, they are able to enter into a mystical communion with their Spirit Ancestors.

Blackline Master 3, Quiz

1. What legend do all Australian Aborigines share?

Answer: The Dreamtime Legend

2. What is Kata Tjuta? Why is it important?

Answer: This is a collection of smaller, more rounded rocks found 25 miles to the west of Uluru. The name means “many heads.” It is a very sacred Aborigine Dreaming spot that is not to be talked about with outsiders. The Dreamtime myths that inhabit Kata Tjuta are considered very powerful.

3. What Aborigine group makes it home on the islands of Melville and Bathurst off Australia’s northern coast?

Answer: The Tiwi

4. What is the Aborigine name for Ayers Rock?

Answer: The Aborigines call it Uluru.

5. What Aborigine group makes it home in the Red Center of Australia’s mainland near Uluru?

Answer: The Anangu

6. Why do the Aborigines consider the land sacred?

Answer: They do not believe that they own the land but that the land owns them. They believe that some of their Spirit Ancestors stayed in this world and became actual features of the landscape. They believe that all living things and even inanimate objects are inhabited by their ancestor’s spirits. Every rock, tree, flower, mountain, insect, blade of grass, is a part of their own spiritual heritage.

7. What ceremony is celebrated when a Tiwi dies? What happens during this ceremony?

Answer: The Pukamani ceremony is celebrated. The body is wrapped in tree bark and buried. The Pukamani poles are placed around the grave site. Each pole is unique. For several days the mourners sing and dance. They ask the spirit ancestors to guide and protect their relative through the world of the dead. After the ceremony, the poles are left to eventually decay and disappear back into the land.

8. Why is it important that the ancestral Dreamtime stories continue to be reenacted?

Answer: The Aborigines continue to reenact their ancestral Dreamtime stories as part of their spirit life. They also believe this is an important way to work toward keeping their traditions alive. They also believe it is the way to ensure the continuation of all earth's species.

9. What is the name of the mythical poisonous snake-warriors that engaged in an epic battle with the Kuniya?

Answer: The Luri

10. How do the Tiwi prepare for their ritual dances?

Answer: They mix together clay and water. They paint their faces and bodies with symbols of their personal origins--the Dreamings of their family.

Blackline Master 4, Word Match

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. G |
| 2. D | 7. E |
| 3. B | 8. H |
| 4. F | 9. J |
| 5. A | 10. I |

LIST OF RESOURCES/SUGGESTED READINGS

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SCRIPT OF RECORDED NARRATION

Their spirit is as old as earth. For millions of years before them, this continent lay empty, eroding under the blistering sun, the relentless wind.

The Aboriginal people of Australia have lived here for tens of thousands of years, surviving the austere emptiness by banding together into hundreds of tribes, each with its own language, traditions and celebrations.

They formed a bond with the land that sustains them to this day. It's a spiritual link based on myths and legends, mystical rites and exotic ceremonies called Dreamtime.

"We don't own the land ... the land owns us."

Some believe as many as a million once lived in Australia. Today, roughly a quarter remain, scattered across more than four and a half million square miles.

The most isolated of the world's continents, Australia is located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. A massive island nation, it's about the size of the continental United States.

The lower half of the Northern Territory is an endless stretch of flat, arid desert. Called the Red Center, it's the geographic -- and spiritual -- heart of Australia. The area is so rich in iron that at certain times of day it glows like the crimson embers.

In stark contrast, the north coastal region of the Northern Territory is tropical and filled with dense rain forests and alluring beaches. On the islands of Melville and Bathurst, the Aborigine group called Tiwi make their home.

For thousands of years the Tiwi lived a free and relatively easy life, thriving on the rich bounty provided by the land and the sea.

Long isolated from other human contact, the Tiwi believed their islands comprised the entire world. When they saw smoke coming from the mainland less than twenty-five miles away, they thought it was fire

emanating from the spirit realm—the mystical place to which their souls journey after death.

But the smoke may have come from the Anangu, one of the hundreds of nomadic groups that live on the mainland.

The Anangu and Tiwi appear to be as different as the landscapes in which they live. Yet they're spiritually bound by the legends of Dreamtime—the time all Aborigines know as the age of creation.

In the beginning, they believe, the world was lifeless, the land flat and without features.

Then, from under the earth, emerged the Spirit Ancestors—part human, part mythical beings. The ancestors explored the empty countryside. And as they traveled, they brought into this world all the features of the land and the creatures to inhabit it.

When creation was complete, some of the Spirit Ancestors vanished back into the earth. They left behind images of their physical form in the shape of unusual rocks or outlines etched within the surface. Others stayed in this world and became actual features of the landscape.

Aborigines believe they're direct descendents of the Spirit Ancestors and that all inanimate objects and all living things are inhabited by their ancestor's spirits.

Rocks, trees, insects, even the water hole is a part of their own spiritual heritage.

This is the essence of Dreamtime. More than just a creation myth, it's a realm in which spirits still exist. And each day, by renewing and maintaining the land, Aborigines are able to enter into a mystical communion with their Spirit Ancestors.

“This is not a rock. It is my Grandfather—this place where the Dreaming comes up, right up from inside the ground.”

To the Aborigines of Australia, everything they see about them is a reminder of Dreamtime—the time when their Spirit Ancestors created all that is within the world today.

And from the seemingly endless desert called the outback erupts one of the great wonders of the natural world. This smooth sandstone mountain is among the most sacred Aboriginal sites.

In the nineteenth century, a British surveyor named it Ayer's Rock. But to the Aborigines, it's always been known as Uluru—the Great Pebble.

Two miles long and five miles in circumference, this vast monolith climbs to more than a thousand feet. It's so huge it affects the surrounding temperature and air currents, creating its own weather.

And as the sun passes across the sky each day, the bare stone surface changes dramatically in color ... from red ... to orange ... to purple.

The Anangu who live here trace their heritage—or dreaming—to the Spirit Ancestors who created Uluru. As part of the moral code of Dreamtime they guard the natural world around them.

By adhering to the Dreamtime laws, they believe the Spirit Ancestors will provide the sacred knowledge they need for survival.

Dreamtime teaches Aborigines how to carve a tool to throw a spear further when hunting prey.

Dreamtime tells the Anangu when bush raisins are ripe to eat and how to thresh the seeds of spinifex grass and melt them down for glue.

Like all male members of the Anangu, Billy Wara reenacts the ancestral stories of Dreamtime as part of his spirit life.

His stories help ensure the continuation of the Aboriginal way of life and, it's believed, of all species.

Billy tells of a mythic battle between the Kuniya, a group of nonvenomous carpet-snakes, and the Liru, a party of poisonous snake-warriors.

As he weaves his tale, Billy gestures toward the snake-like features found on Uluru. The markings are symbolic of the Spirit Ancestors—they exist everywhere around him.

Deep ridges on the side of the rock are tracks made by the snakes. Potholes in the face of the cliff were left by a shower of spears thrown by the warriors. The stream that feeds into a waterhole below is the blood of a snake killed in the fighting.

The battle is just one story of the conflict between good and evil. But to the Anangu, it's more than just a simple morality play. It's a metaphor for the origins of their universe and the proper place and behavior of all elements within it.

Roughly 25 miles from Uluru is Kata Tjuta, which means Many Heads. It's such a sacred Dreaming site the Anangu refuse to even speak of it to outsiders.

The Dreamtime myths that inhabit this eerie collection of steep domes, caves and gorges are a powerful force, and to reveal them would be a sacrilege -- an evil deed that was once punishable by death.

And so the ritual knowledge remains a mystery to all but the Anangu ... caretakers of the spirit of this desolate land.

It's a spirit shared by the Tiwi of the northern islands, a Dreamtime magic brought to life through music, rhythm and dance.

Only a narrow stretch of ocean separates Bathurst and Melville from mainland Australia. Yet the Aboriginal people of these islands, the Tiwi, lived for thousands of years completely isolated from all other humans.

They reveal their Dreamtime knowledge through the creation of elaborate works of art designed to capture the essence of life.

But it's their haunting songs and dances that dramatically express their spiritual bond with the land.

In preparation for ritual dance, the Tiwi mix together clay and water. They paint their faces and bodies with symbols of their personal origins ... the Dreamings of their family.

The Tiwi live by traditional values. Their ceremonies recount mythic tales of winds and tides ... hunting with ancient weapons ... the deadly stalking of a shark.

Some of the dances recall the Dreamtime legend of how their islands were created. These were once desolate places shrouded in darkness.

From under the ground, an old blind woman named Mudungkala rose to this world carrying her three children in a basket. As she crawled across the featureless landscape, sea water filled the imprints made by her body and formed the channel between the islands.

Mudungkala gave her children fire, and covered the land with living things. Then she disappeared, leaving her children to settle the earth.

The Tiwi believe they're descendants of Mudungkala. For thousands of years they've worshipped the land that contains her spirit. But at the dawn of the 20th century strange new visitors arrived bringing with them a very different creation story.

Jesuit Missionaries were anxious to convert the Tiwi to Catholicism.

Today, Catholic and Tiwi beliefs co-exist. While many Tiwi have embraced the Catholic faith, Dreamtime ceremonies are still a vital aspect of their lives. And none is more significant, or sacred, than Pukamani – the story of how Death descended upon this world.

In Australia, the land is at the heart of all things. It's a spiritual presence against which every human drama is played out.

The Aborigines of Bathurst and Melville islands still use traditional ceremonies to celebrate the Dreamtime lessons of life. But they also turn to song and dance to deal with the end of life, when the human spirit passes into the world of the dead.

When a Tiwi dies, the body is wrapped in tree bark and buried. Around the gravesite special burial poles -- called Pukamani -- are used to help remember the deceased. They protect the spirit of the dead, as well as the spirits of those left behind.

The poles are decorated in bold, vibrant colors. The geometric shapes often relate to the artist's own Dreaming or illustrate a mythical event. But while each pole is different, all display designs unique to the Tiwi people.

It can take months to prepare the Pukamani poles, and during that time relatives mourn the deceased. Once completed, the poles are placed around the gravesite and become the focus of the most important of all rituals--the Pukamani ceremony.

For several days mourners sing and dance. They appeal to the Spirit Ancestors to protect and guide their relative through the world of the dead.

When the ritual draws to a close, the poles are abandoned. Like the body of the deceased, they're left to decay ... to disappear back into the land from which they came.

In the Red Center of Australia's mainland, the Anangu also mark the passage from life to death with special rituals. But these mystical ceremonies remain a secret to all but the initiated.

What is known is that an Anangu must die near their place of birth ... near the site of their Dreaming. Whether it's Uluru -- or Kata Tjuta -- the Anangu will return, even if they must travel thousands of miles to their homeland.

And so too will all Aborigines return to the places where their Spirit Ancestors reside. In death, they become one again with the rock, bird, insect and mountain.

They come to a mystical time outside of time, where all things are united in a perfect harmony...Dreamtime.

**AUSTRALIA - Dreamtime
from the Mystic Lands Series
VOCABULARY**

Anangu - Australian Aborigine nomadic group which makes its home in the Red Center of Australia's mainland near Uluru (Ayers Rock).

Ayers Rock (Uluru) - a vast monolith two miles long and five miles in circumference which reaches a height of more than 1,000 feet. It is believed that two thirds of the Rock lies buried beneath the sand. In 1873, the Australian explorer William Gosse named the rock in honor of Sir Henry Ayers, premier of Australia. It has always been, and remains, Uluru - the "Great Pebble" - to the Aborigines. It is the most sacred of Aboriginal sites.

Dreamtime - The Australian Aborigine age of creation. It is also a realm where the spirits still exist, an ongoing spiritual reality for the Aborigines. The paths the Spirit Ancestors took on their journeys are called Dreaming tracks or songlines. Following these tracks, telling the ancient stories, and singing the ancestral songs enables the Aborigines to enter into the world of the Dreaming and become as one with the Spirit Ancestors and the landscape. For the Aborigines, Dreaming (Dreamtime) is not just the act of primordial creation, it is also, and most significantly, an eternal dimension of time continuous with the present.

Kata Tjuta - a collection of smaller, more rounded rocks which stand 25 miles west of Uluru. Meaning "many heads", Kata Tjuta is a sacred Dreaming site of the Aborigines. It is considered to be of such significance that the Anangu refuse to speak of it to outsiders.

Kuniya - mythical, native, non-venomous, carpet-snakes people. According to aboriginal belief, the Kuniya fought an epic battle at Mutijilda, an Ayers Rock gorge, against the Liru.

Liru - mythical poisonous snake-warriors. According to tradition, the Liru engaged in an epic battle against the Kuniya.

Mudungkala - According to legend, Mudungkala, an old blind woman, rose from the underground carrying her three children in a basket. She gave her children fire, covered the earth with living things and then left her children to settle the earth. The Tiwi believe they are descendants of Mudungkala.

Pukamani poles - special burial poles of the Tiwi. These boldly decorated, colorful poles serve as a way to remember the deceased and as a means of protection for the one who has died, as well as the survivors.

Tiwi - Australian Aborigine group which makes their home on the islands of Melville and Bathurst off Australia's northern coast, near Darwin. Until this century their island homes kept them fairly isolated from mainland influences. Tiwi culture still retains much of its unique character. Most Tiwi live on Bathurst Island.

**AUSTRALIA - Dreamtime
from the *Mystic Lands* Series
VIEWER'S GUIDE**

Directions: Answer the following questions immediately after viewing the video or as instructed by your teacher. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

1. Australia's Aborigine tribes are spiritually bound together by what legend?
2. What is the Dreamtime legend of creation?
3. What do the Aborigines believe about their ancestors' spirits?
4. What is the essence of Dreamtime?
5. What is Ayers Rock? What is its Aborigine name?
6. How does abiding by Dreamtime laws help contemporary Aborigines?
7. Why do the Aborigines continue to reenact their ancestral Dreamtime stories?
8. How is the story of the battle between the Kuniya and Luri recorded?
9. What taboo surrounds Kata Tjuta?
10. How do the Tiwi believe their islands were created?
11. What are the Pukamani poles? What is their importance and when are they used?
12. What is the Aborigine relationship to the land ?

AUSTRALIA - Dreamtime
from the Mystic Lands Series
WORD MATCH

Directions: Match the terms in the column on the left with the correct definition in the column of the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ Liru | A. According to legend, an old blind woman who rose from the underground carrying her three children in a basket. She gave them fire, covered the earth with living things, and then left them to settle the earth. |
| 2. _____ Dreamtime | B. Australian Aborigine nomadic group which makes its home in the Red Center of Australia's mainland near Uluru. |
| 3. _____ Anangu | C. Mythical poisonous snake-warriors. |
| 4. _____ Kuniya | D. The Australian Aborigine age of creation; a realm where the spirits still exist, an ongoing spiritual reality for the Aborigines. |
| 5. _____ Mudungkala | E. A sacred Dreaming site of the Aborigines; it is considered to be of such significance that the Anangu refuse to speak of it to outsiders. |
| 6. _____ Ayers Rock (Uluru) | F. Mythical, native, non-venomous, carpet-snakes people. |
| 7. _____ Kata Tjuta | G. The most sacred of Aboriginal sites. |
| 8. _____ Tiwi | H. Australian Aborigine group which makes their home on the islands of Melville and Bathurst off Australia's northern coast. Their culture still retains much of its unique character. |
| 9. _____ Aborigine | I. Serve as a way to remember the deceased and as a means of protection for the one who has died as well as the survivors. |
| 10. _____ Pukamani poles | J. An original inhabitant of a country or area. |

**AUSTRALIA - Dreamtime
from the Mystic Lands Series
QUIZ**

Directions: Answer the following questions using the back of this sheet if necessary.

1. What legend do all Australian Aborigines share?

2. What is Kata Tjuta? Why is it important?

3. What Aborigine group makes it home on the islands of Melville and Bathurst off of Australia's northern coast?

4. What is the Aborigine name for Ayers Rock?

5. What Aborigine group makes it home in the Red Center of Australia's mainland near Uluru?

6. Why do the Aborigines consider the land sacred?

7. What ceremony is celebrated when a Tiwi dies? What happens during this ceremony?

8. Why is it important that the ancestral Dreamtime stories continue to be reenacted?

9. What is the name of the mythical poisonous snake-warriors that engaged in an epic battle with the Kuniya?

10. How do the Tiwi prepare for their ritual dances?