

Name:  
Hour:

## *Sacred Circles*

Since the beginning of time the circle has been an important symbol to mankind. People saw circles all around them in nature, so it is no surprise that they appear in their written languages and early artworks. In the box below brainstorm places in nature you see circles.

### *Circles in Nature*

In addition to representing some of the basic shapes we see in our environment, circles are also used to describe cycles. Pre-Colombian calendars were in the shape of a circle to represent a yearlong cycle, sundials are made in the shape of a circle to represent a daylong cycle, and the journey from birth to death is often referred to as the circle of life.

### *Sun Wheels*

The sun plays an important role in the spiritual beliefs of many civilizations. The sun is the source of all life and is the most commonly depicted 'circle' in artwork all over the world. Artists created sun wheels as an attempt to put ideas and feelings about the mysterious fiery ball in the sky into a visible form. The earliest depiction of the sun was circular with short lines coming from the underside of the circle.



Native Americans used a circle with a dot in the middle. This symbol also signified "spirit" in their written language. In ancient Greece, the sun was depicted as a wheel of the golden chariot driven across the sky by the god Apollo.

In ancient Egypt, the sun was drawn as a circle with wings to represent a falcon high in the sky. In some paintings the path of the sun was shown as a serpent in a circle biting its tail. This serpent was also a symbol for the continuation of life.



Examples of prehistoric sun wheels found in Europe and the Far East have short lines protruding from circles or circles containing crosses. Suns have also been depicted as spirals to signify the unfolding nature of life.



Even the ancient Chinese symbol of the yang-yin circle stood for the light side of the mountain, or the warmth and light of the sun, and the shady side of the mountain, or the coolness of the shade. All of the above can be called pictures of the sun, but they should also be considered as the representation of the continuation of life.

### PROJECT

For this project you will be creating your own unique sacred circle. In your circles you will emphasize the “inner light” of the human spirit using your hand as the common thread. Think about the following questions when creating your design:

- ❖ *How can you show your inner light, energy, and spirit?*
- ❖ *What symbols or shapes will you use to represent yourself? Will the shapes be organic or geometric?*
- ❖ *How can you use value and texture to show your inner spirit?*
- ❖ *How does your inner light connect with the human spirit of mankind?*

Follow these steps to create your Sacred Circle:

- ❖ Brainstorm ideas and write them down (use questions above!!)
- ❖ Practice your design on the scrap black construction paper first.
  - Create value (lightness and darkness) – remember you are using white pencil on dark paper. This is the reverse of what you are used to!!
  - Create texture (smooth, rough, soft, sharp, etc)
  - Show movement (flowing, abrupt, etc)
- ❖ Discuss your design with the teacher
- ❖ Use a compass to draw a large circle on a 12' x12' piece of black construction paper
- ❖ Trace your hand once or twice inside your circle.
- ❖ In the space around your hand use value, texture, and movement to represent your “inner light.” Show how you connect with the human spirit of all mankind. **Do not color inside your hand!**