



Pine Ridge Reservation Cultural Immersion and Service Trip
Oglala Lakota Sioux Nation
South Dakota

June 14-22, 2026

Application Deadline: March 1, 2026

PLEASE KEEP THIS DETAILED OVERVIEW OF THE TRIP FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION!

Apply online: brebeuf.org/pineridge or pick up an application in the World Languages office from Sra. Beck



Pine Ridge Cultural Immersion and Mission Trip 2025

PINE RIDGE CULTURAL IMMERSION AND SERVICE TRIP 2026: JUNE 14-22, 2026

Karen Beck, Program Director (Spanish teacher - World Languages Department)

Hannah Rao, Religious Studies Department

Additional Chaperones: TBD

Spiritual Advisors, at Brebeuf and on the Reservation:

Fr. Chris Johnson, S.J., Vice President for Mission and Jesuit Identity

Fr. Ron Seminara, S.J., Pine Ridge Reservation, town of Kyle, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish

Cost of the program: \$1,950. Cost is all-inclusive and includes round-trip airfare to Rapid City, SD, vehicle rental, all meals and snacks, tours, guides, fees, service goods and mission and service work contributions. **TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE! <https://www.brebeuf.org/travel-scholarships>**

PINE RIDGE RESERVATION SNAPSHOT

Each summer, Brebeuf students are invited to experience a unique cultural immersion and service-oriented mission trip to the Oglala Lakota people of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in the southwest corner of South Dakota. This cultural immersion experience reflects the Brebeuf Mission Statement in that this type of experience fosters a culture of understanding and dialogue with people of diverse religious, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Native American reservations in the United States are among the most impoverished areas, and students are immersed in the realities of this poverty, often overlooked or unknown by those who do not live on or near any of the tribal reservations in the United States. The total land area of the Pine Ridge Reservation is 2.1 million acres, with 1.7 million acres held in trust by the United States government. By land area, the reservation is the seventh largest in the country. According to the 2010 census, the population on the Pine Ridge Reservation is approximately 18,834, although the Oglala Sioux Tribe, which boasts an enrollment of 46,855 members. Per capita income on Pine Ridge is \$7,773. The average for all reservations is \$10,543. The United States average is \$27,599. The median household income is \$26,721 on Pine Ridge Reservation. The United States average is \$53,482. Pine Ridge Reservation ranks as the "poorest" in the nation.

Statistics produced by the Oglala Sioux Tribe paint a bleak picture about the health of the reservation

- *Tuberculosis: 800% higher than America as a whole*
- *Infant mortality: 300% higher than America as a whole*
- *Teen suicide: 150% higher than America as a whole*
- *Approximately 85% of Lakota families are affected by alcoholism*
- *Approximately 58% of grandparents of Lakota families are raising their grandchildren*
- *Approximately 50% of adults over the age of 40 have diabetes*

PINE RIDGE RESERVATION ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES

Black Hills Excursions to Badlands National Park, Crazy Horse Memorial,

Black Elk Peak and Bear Butte

JUNE 14-22, 2026

- ❖ Lodging at the Jesuit volunteer residence in the town of Kyle, located in the southwestern portion of the reservation. Expectations continue for growth in communal living and responsibilities, along with rotating chores and obligations.
- ❖ June 16-19. Serve as leaders and crew for reservation-wide summer vacation bible school for children. Father Ron Seminara, S.J., oversees the process. For over eleven years, Brebeuf students have planned, organized, and implemented summer VBS camp programs, collaborating with the Lakota parishioners to incorporate Lakota traditions and spirituality into the program.
- ❖ Participation in service work on the reservation for one or more families or organizations, caring for children, sorting, and organizing donated goods, clearing property, cleaning debris, assisting with painting, repairs, and general labor needs, etc.
- ❖ Guided visit to Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial and mass grave, site of the 1890 massacre and the AIM (American Indian Movement) occupation for equal rights and social justice in 1973.
- ❖ Guided visit to the gravesites of important Lakota leaders and holy men, including Black Elk and Red Cloud.
- ❖ Teaching sessions with members of the Dull Knife family and other Lakota spiritual leaders.
- ❖ Participation in and/or observation of a Sweat Lodge ceremony (Inipi) offered by James Two Crow, the Dull Knife family or other Lakota spiritual leaders.
- ❖ Guided tour of the Oglala Lakota College and cultural center, including the memorial to all Lakota warrior veterans of all wars.
- ❖ Observation of the Oglala Lakota College Graduation Pow Wow (Wacipi).
- ❖ Possible observation of, with special permission and accompaniment by our Lakota guide, a portion of a Sun Dance ritual, the most sacred religious ceremony to various nations of the Plains Indians.
- ❖ Participation in a Lakota beading class or other Lakota/Native American arts and craft class.
- ❖ Visit to and guided tour of Red Cloud Indian School (Jesuit) in the town of Pine Ridge. Guided tour the Museum and Heritage Center of Red Cloud Indian School. Interview Jesuits serving at the school. Red Cloud Indian School (Grades K-12) was founded as Holy Rosary Mission in 1888 by the Jesuits at the request of Chief Red Cloud.
- ❖ Other cultural immersion activities as appropriate and/or available.

- ❖ Hike to the summit of Black Elk Peak, located in the Black Elk Wilderness. Black Elk Peak is the tallest mountain east of the Rockies and the site where Nicholas Black Elk, Battle of Little Big Horn survivor and Lakota healer and visionary, received his great vision.
- ❖ Visits to Mt. Rushmore, Custer State Park, and the Crazy Horse Memorials.
- ❖ **Silent** hike to the summit of the sacred mountain, Bear Butte. Prior to the hike, Lakota park rangers speak to the students and discuss the history of the mountain, instructing students how to complete the hike respectfully and prayerfully. Teaching session the evening before the hike led by Ivan Looking Horse on the importance of prayer ties in the four Lakota colors that correspond to the four directions. Students create individual prayer ties, assisted by the Lakota leader that they will carry with them up the mountain to hang in the four directions.
- ❖ Hikes in Badlands National Park, adjacent to Pine Ridge Reservation.