

The Story of the Jingle Dress



*Jingle dresses, about 1920
Minnesota Historical Society*

According to the story told by elders of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe... there was a man who kept having a dream of four women who were dancing. They each wore a dress of a different color (red, blue, green, yellow) and each dress was decorated with metal cones that bumped together when they danced to make jingling sounds.

The man told his wife about the dream and showed her the dance steps he saw. She and other community women created the dresses.

At the same time, the man's daughter was very sick. She was hardly able to move in her bed. When the women put on the special dresses and began to dance, the girl moved and began to watch them. By the end of the evening, the little girl was feeling much stronger and began dancing with the women.

Hear and see the story of the jingle dress as told by Elder "Amik" Larry Smallwood. This is an excerpt from the video, "The Jingle Dress Tradition," by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and Twin Cities Public Television: <https://youtu.be/gk7Cha5BVUc> (0:55-8:52)

Where did the idea of the jingle dress come from? _____

What was the original purpose of the jingle dress? _____

View jingle dancers of all ages at the 2015 Hinckley Pow Wow, Grand Entry.
<https://youtu.be/gk7Cha5BVUc> (19:24-24:21)

What does the sound of the jingles remind you of? _____

What instrument is playing a steady beat for the dancers? _____

Do you hear men's voices or women's voices singing? _____

Who is allowed to dance the jingle dance? _____