Ghost Woman
The Blackfeet people have different types of ceremonies to help their people who are sick or who are having problems in their lives.

The following story is about the origin of the fly pipe ceremony which is used by a group of the Blackfeet people to heal the sick spiritually and physically.
Coyote Man and his wife Otter Woman had a little boy, Flies Along. One day Coyote Man's wife got very sick and died. Coyote Man really loved his wife and so did the little boy. The boy Flies Along was really lonely. He kept crying every day and every night for his mother. Flies Along started to get sick. He was so lonesome for his mother.
One day Coyote Man told his people, "I pity my son very much and I love him. I also miss my wife. I loved her very much. I'm going to look for her."

Coyote Man headed east. He kept walking. He slept at night. He saw all kinds of animals and birds.
The animals or birds would come to him and say, "We pity you and we know what you are after, but we can't help you." Coyote Man kept going, trying to find Big Sand. This is where he felt he would find his wife. He believed that when Indians die they go to Big Sand.
One night when Coyote Man was sleeping he heard people talking. A man’s voice said, “You people see this man lying here? Get away from him and don’t bother him. Go some place else. Leave him alone and let him sleep.”

The spirit then told Coyote Man, “I feel sorry for you. I know what you are after. You will get your wife back and you will go home with her. You will have to go through a sacred ceremony, however, before you can have your wife back. There are certain things that you must remember not to do.”
Coyote Man realized he had finally reached Big Sand, the land of the spirits.
The next day four sweat lodges were put up. Sweat lodges are used for cleansing spiritually and physically, as well as for good health. Soon Coyote Man looked up and saw his wife Otter Woman approaching with a pipe in her hands. He was very happy. The spirit told him, “Now we must perform the sacred ceremony before your wife is able to go back with you.”
The woman went into the first sweat lodge. When she came out there were all kinds of different bugs, weeds, and small sand piles in the sweat lodge. She went into the second sweat lodge. When she came out there were less bugs and weeds than the first time. Otter Woman went into the third lodge and there were hardly any bugs or weeds left in there. There were no bugs or weeds at all in the fourth sweat lodge.
The spirit told the man, “Now you have your wife back. You may go home. Take this fly pipe with you. In future generations use the fly pipe and the ceremony that we have just completed to help your people. Make this sacrifice for your people who are ill or need help. When you get home go through this ceremony again. Put up four sweat lodges and use the pipe as I have instructed you. Remember to be kind to your wife. Do not call her Ghost Woman, or lazy.”
Coyote Man then took his wife home. When he got home he did what he was told to do. He set up four sweat lodges and did the pipe ceremony as he had been told.

When Coyote Man and his wife entered the first sweat lodge and came out, the lodge was filled with bugs and weeds. The same thing happened with the second and third lodges. The fourth lodge did not have any bugs or weeds in it.

Coyote Man and his wife lived happily for some time until he started becoming impatient with her. Coyote Man said, "You forget everything. I tell you to do something and you do the opposite thing." One evening Coyote Man and his friends sat around the campfire in the lodge eating and telling stories. The fire started to burn low. "Otter Woman, put some more wood on the fire so it will keep burning." Instead of Otter Woman putting wood on the fire, she poured water on it. The men in the lodge knew the man was getting angry so they went home. After everyone was gone Coyote Man told his wife, "I didn't tell you to pour water on the fire. I told you to put more wood on it. Everybody knows you are a Ghost Woman and lazy."
Otter Woman went screaming to the bed and covered up with a buffalo robe. Coyote Man thought about what he had said. He remembered that he had been told not to use the word Ghost Woman and the word “lazy.” He regretted using those words. He was very sorry. He went over to his wife where she was covered with the buffalo robe.
Coyote Man pulled the robe up but found only a skeleton there. Coyote Man never did get his wife back after that. However, the sacred fly pipe ceremony for helping and cleansing and healing people is still carried on today.
Booklets available in the Level IV sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the Planned Sequence of use in the Teacher’s Manual. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest are included in the Levels I, II and III sequences.

1. Warm Springs Animal Stories
   The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

2. Snail Women at Squax’le
   The Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation

3. Blue Jay – Star Child/Basket Woman
   Muckleshoot Tribe

4. Assiniboine Woman Making Grease
   Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

5. Coyote
   The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

6. How the Summer Season Came
   Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Belknap Reservation

7. Little Weasel’s Dream
   Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

8. Fort Hall Stories
   Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

9. The Bear Tepee
   Northern Cheyenne Tribe

10. Sioux Stories and Legends
    Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

11. Kootenai Stories
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

12. Chief Mountain’s Medicine
    Gros Ventre Tribe from the Fort Belknap Reservation

13. Coyote the Trickster
    Burns Paiute Reservation

14. Running Free
    Shoalwater Bay

15. Salish Coyote Stories
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

16. Coyote and the Cowboys
    Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

17. Napi’s Journey
    Blackfeet Tribe

18. Warm Springs Stories
    The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

19. Tepee Making
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

20. Baskets and Canoes
    Skokomish Tribe

21. Warrior People
    Blackfeet Tribe