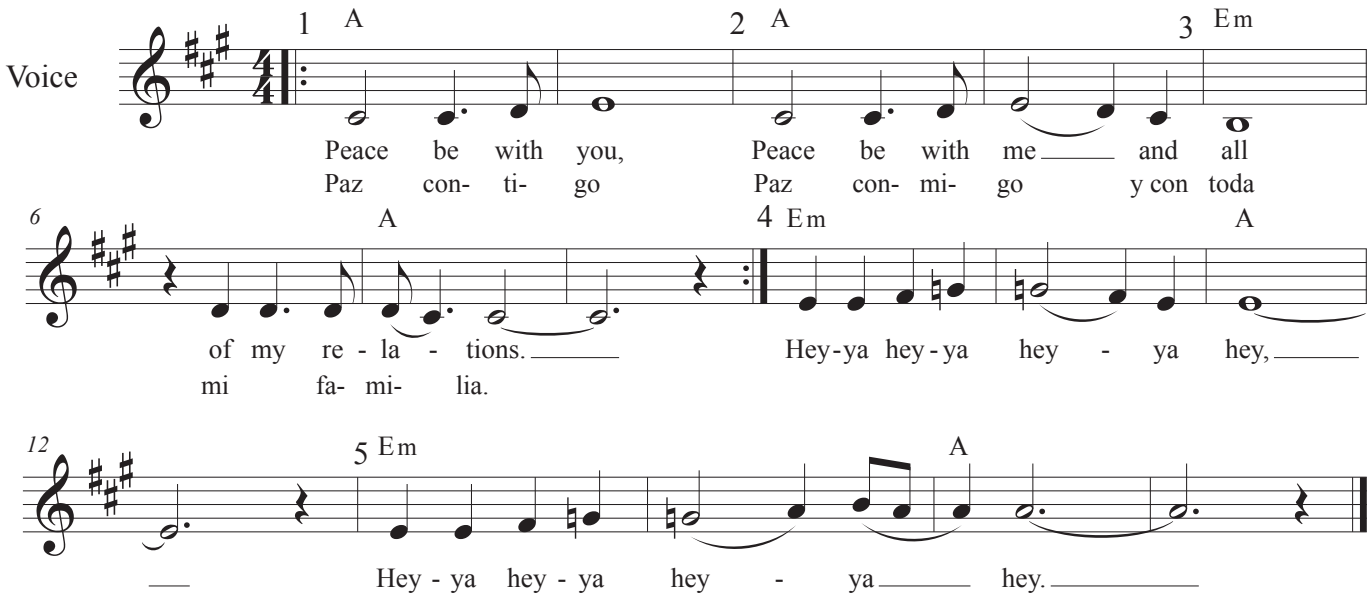
All My Relations/Toda Mi Familia

Words, music, and movements by Grace Marie



1. Move toward your partner, left arm at your side, right hand extending toward your partner, placing your right hand on the lower part of the forearm above the wrist, in a gesture of power and support, where the main life blood flows.
2. Place your left hand to your own heart.
3. Make a half-turn clockwise with your partner beginning on “all." Stay with the partner for the full phrase. Be completely present with you partner until the end of "relations.” Then turn to face your next partner.

Repeat with the new partner, and end up facing the center.

4. All facing the center, not holding hands, palms facing the earth, honor, call upon, and draw up the wisdom of past, present and future beings, including and inviting them into the tipi. Come in 8 steps towards the center, raising arms. At the 4th step, begin crossing the wrists to form the poles of a “tipi."
5. Begin moving back on the right foot, moving arms slowly toward the earth with palms facing the earth, and at your own sides by the end of the phrase.

In the early to mid 1970's, traditional Catholic Mass was changing from using Latin to English, using guitars and folk style music of the day, to bring the Church into "modern" times. From 1973 to 1976, I was the director for a young people's guitar mass choir at Sacred Heart of Jesus Polish Church in Cleveland, Ohio. I created songs for the Mass, this being one of them, but never sang it, as it had no definite words. In the fall of 1976, I moved to the Four Corners region of SW Colorado, where I developed a close relationship with an elder Ute medicine woman, Lolita Gonzales. The words to this song came easily when we were together. The song, with its movements, is in remembrance of our friendship and our shared cultures that continue through our joined spirits and those of all my relations.

The meaning of the words: During the Mass, there is a time for giving each other a sign of peace, in the form of turning to someone in the pews, with an extended hand, eye contact, and saying, "Peace be with you." “Peace be with me” would affirm our own peace. "All my relations," in Native earth-based traditions, include all beings, seen and unseen, of past, present, and future. These include animals, insects, trees, plants, spirit guides, etc. The words "Hey ya hey ya hey ya hey" are used to call attention to a phrase and relies on the intention of the way it is presented.

The two chords used, A and Em, can be alternated with a 7th by removing the finger from the 2nd string for the A chord. While the Em chord is played, the 2nd string can be alternated by adding it at the 3rd fret.

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