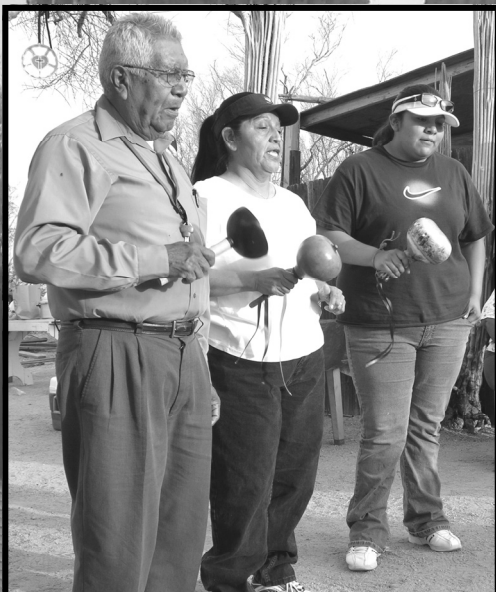


## Bahidaj (Sahuaro Cactus Fruit) Harvest



Tohono O'odham since time immemorial picked the fruit of the giant saguaro cactus. The fruit ripens in the month of June, and AILDI incorporates this activity into its schedule to allow students to participate in a local tradition and cultural event. Although sometimes the monsoon rains gets to the fruit first. Prior to each harvesting season the family or camp group offers a prayer to the land upon which these saguaros live. The blessing expresses the thankfulness of the elements, and the sun which enables life to flourish in the desert. The fruit of the saguaro is used to make syrup, jams, and other delectable servings for the family table. We have always been reminded to respect the life of these giant beings as they are our protectors and our relatives.



Singing a blessing before the bahidaj harvest. L-R: Danny Lopez, Regina Siquieros, Megan Siquieros (AILDI 2005)



Stella Tucker demonstrates how to use the *kuipad* (AILDI 2009)