

National Day for Truth & Reconciliation: Orange Shirt Day

Background, Resources & Ideas

The Canadian Government offered an apology to Indigenous people for the residential school system that existed from 1884 to 1996. The government then instituted a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to document much of the suffering on the public record, and to offer recommendations for a new relationship. **Orange Shirt Day** was created during the St. Joseph Mission Residential School Commemoration Project in Williams Lake, BC, in May 2013. Former student, Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, told her story of her first day at residential school when her new orange shirt was taken from her as a six-year old girl, which prompted the realization that many survivors have similar stories. This orange shirt taken from one child is a symbol of the many losses experienced by thousands of students, and their families and communities, over several generations including: loss of family, language, culture, freedom, parenting, self-esteem and worth, and painful experiences of abuse and neglect. The date was chosen because children are back in school and teachers have time to plan, and because it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the year. Orange Shirt Day is also an opportunity for Indigenous partners (First Nation, Metis and Inuit), local governments, schools and community agencies to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come.



ADSB Video Resources:

Shirley Horn shares her story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxczionzKHc>

Barbara Nolan share her story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n-ceDoYuAU>

Video Resources:

Phyllis Webstad Orange Shirt Story:

<http://youtu.be/ll1pUrK29MM>

St. Joseph Mission Residential School Commemoration:

<http://youtu.be/JkssXtgScMQ>

Federal Apology for Residential Schools:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ryC74bbrEE>

Heritage Minute (Chanie Wenjack):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_tcCpKtoU0

Additional Resources: For additional information please consult some of the following resources:

Manitoba Teachers' Society (Lesson Activities & Resources): [Manitoba Lesson Activities & Resource Link](#)

Legacy of Hope

<http://www.legacyofhope.ca/>

Reconciliation Canada

<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/>

Secret Path (videos, background info)

<http://secretpath.ca>

Downie Wenjack Fund (Legacy Schools)

<https://downiewenjack.ca/>

Poem by Rita Joe - "I lost my talk"

<http://www.greens.org/s-r/05/05-32.html>

Primary / Junior

Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi's Canoe

by Nicola I. Campbell

When I was Eight and Not my Girl

by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Fatty Legs / A Stranger at Home

by Christy Jordan Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Kookum's Red Shoes

by Peter Eyvindson

Secret Path

by Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire

Residential Schools *with words and images of Survivors*

by Larry Loyie

Goodbye Buffalo Bay

by Larry Loyie

The Orange Shirt Story

by Phyllis Webstad

Intermediate / Senior

Wenjack

by Joseph Boyden

Residential Schools *with words and images of Survivors*

by Larry Loyie

Indian Horse

by Richard Wagamese

Ideas for School & Classroom Activities:

1. Register your class with the national online virtual Truth & Reconciliation Week events with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation – [Truth & Reconciliation Week Registration Link](#)
2. *Every Child Matters – Reconciliation through Education* – [Student Resource & Educator's Guide Link](#)
3. *Truth & Reconciliation Week 2021 Educational Package* (Grades 5-12) – [Student Resource & Educator's Guide Link](#)
4. Take your class on a virtual tour of the Reclaiming Shingwauk Hall Exhibition and site: [Shingwauk Virtual Tour](#)
5. *Grade 10-12 Classes*: view the movie *Indian Horse* & complete pre and post activities
6. Encourage students/staff to wear orange on a designated day – t-shirt, clothing, scarf, ribbon etc
7. Watch the video of Phyllis's story <http://youtu.be/ll1pUrK29MM>
8. Discuss the meaning of the phrase "Every Child Matters."
9. Children trace their hand, write in the hand something they can do to help others feel like they matter.
10. Have students design their own orange t-shirts.
11. Have students develop a segment for the morning announcements
12. While a school in-person assembly is not possible, host a virtual Teams assembly