

Truth & Reconciliation Week

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Truth and Reconciliation Day



On September 30th we will observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which has been implemented in response to the recommendations from the 2015 [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#). As a Christian community we are united in our desire to bring reconciliation and hope to those who are hurting, as was modelled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

We believe this is an excellent opportunity for our students to walk out the HCOS [Biblical Attribute](#) of **restoration**. The description reads, “Students will become aware of the call to be compassionate peacemakers, and to be participants in God’s mission to bring about the restoration and reconciliation of all things according to His intention for creation.”

During this time of reflection on our history as a nation, our team has assembled a list of resources to help support your family as we all work towards healing and reconciliation. As our community takes a pause to observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, it is our prayer that you and your family will find opportunities to help fulfill God’s mandate of restoration.

Resources

- [Learning Commons Resources](#)
- [Website Resources](#)
- [How the Church is Responding](#)
- [Choose Your Own Adventure: Indigenous Resources Menu](#)

Orange Shirt Day

Truth and Reconciliation Day is also recognized as Orange Shirt Day. Wearing Orange has become a symbol of hope, reconciliation and a commitment to a better future.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/36JFCOnufSw?t=58s>

The Orange Shirt Society will have their new 2025 design available for purchase at a variety of retailers throughout BC, such as:

- Aritzia
- Canadian Tire
- London Drugs
- Mark's
- Thrifty Foods

This year's design was created by Sloane Cameron, a Grade 6 student from Innisfail, Alberta. Click here to learn more [about the meaning behind the 2025 design](#).

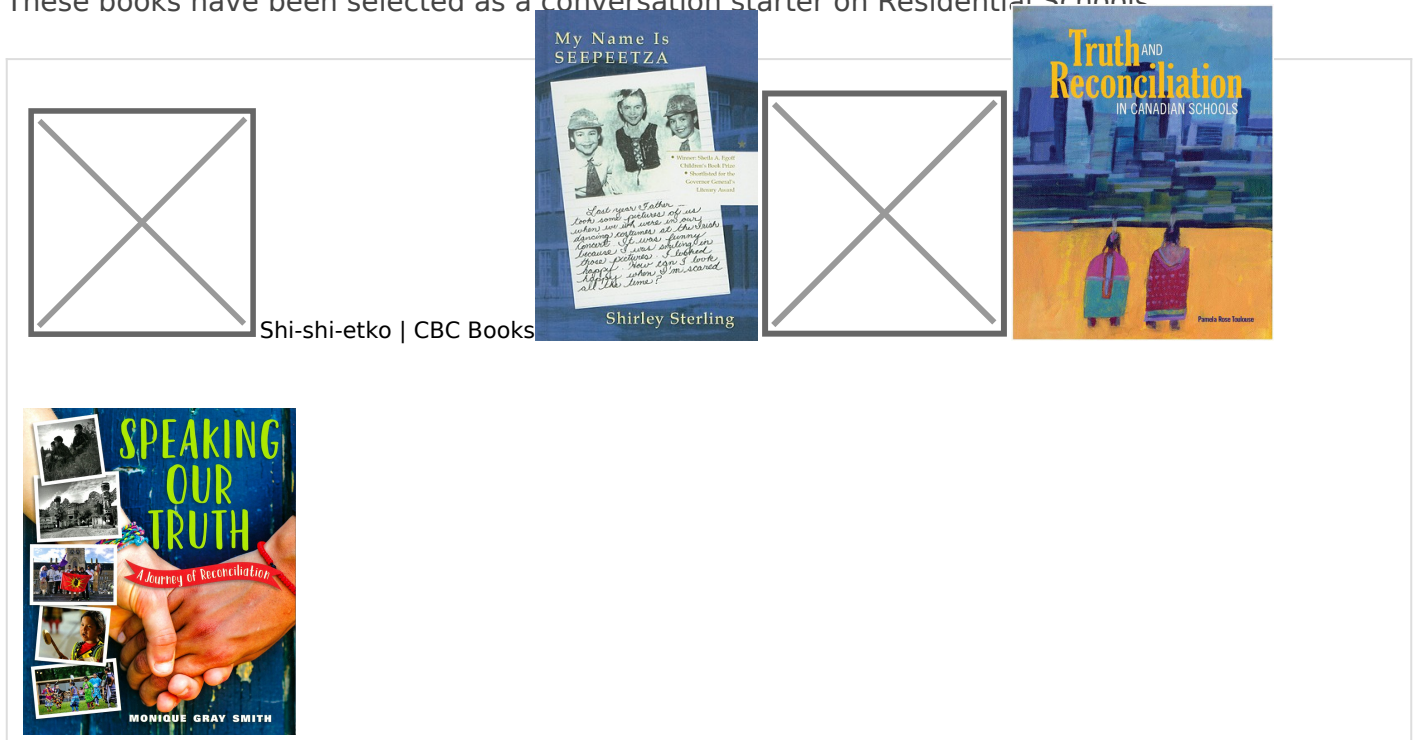
Learning Commons Resources

Truth and Reconciliation

Due to the sensitive nature of Truth and Reconciliation Day topics, we recommend that parents guide their students in conversations while using these suggested resources.

Learning Commons | Selected Books

These books have been selected as a conversation starter on Residential Schools.



Primary (Grades K-4)

- **Shi-shi-etco** and **Shin-chi's Canoe** are beautiful, award-winning picture books written by Nicola L. Campbell. They share the poignant journey of a young sister and brother as they prepare to leave their family and attend a residential school.
- **My Heart Fills with Happiness** by Monique Gray Smith. This beautiful board book is for our littles to serve as a reminder to reflect on and cherish the moments in life that bring us joy.
- **When I Was Eight** by Christy Jordan-Fenton is based on the bestselling memoir Fatty Legs, but for younger readers. Olemaun is eight and knows a lot of things. But she does not know how to read. Ignoring her father's warnings, she travels far from her Arctic home to the outsiders' school to learn. The nuns at the school call her Margaret. They cut off her long hair and force her to do menial chores, but she remains undaunted. Her tenacity draws the attention of a black-cloaked nun who tries to break her spirit at every turn. But the young girl is more determined than ever to learn to read.

- **Amik Loves School:** A Story of Wisdom by Katharena Vermette. Amik tells Moshoom about his wonderful school. Then his grandfather tells him about the residential school he went to, so different from Amik's school, so Amik has an idea...
 - *Amik Loves School* is one book in The Seven Teachings Stories series. The Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabe—love, wisdom, humility, courage, respect, honesty, and truth—are revealed in these seven stories for children. Set in an urban landscape with Indigenous children as the central characters, these stories about home and family will look familiar to all young readers.

Middle School (Grades 5-9)

- **When We Were Alone** by David Roberston & Julie Flett - This lovely picture book captures the innocence and curiosity of a young Cree girl who notices the differences between her grandmother and herself. As she asks questions, her grandmother shares her experiences in a residential school when many of her traditional cultural symbols were removed.
- **Not My Girl** by Christy-Jordan Fenton & Margaret-Pokiak Fenton - Margaret can't wait to see her family, but her homecoming is unexpected. Based on the true story of Margaret Pokiak-Fenton and complemented by evocative illustrations, *Not My Girl* makes the original, award-winning memoir, *A Stranger at Home*, accessible to younger children. It is also a sequel to the picture book *When I Was Eight*. A poignant story of a determined young girl's struggle to belong, it will both move and inspire readers everywhere.
- **White Raven** by Teoni Spathelfer & Natassia Davies - All grown up with a family of her own, Little Wolf moves from the big city to the island of her ancestors. She wants to share the beauty and mysteries of nature with her children, and she wants them to learn as much about their culture as possible. One day, Little Wolf's mother, White Raven, visits and begins to tell her grandchildren stories from her own childhood. But the stories are not happy ones. As a child, White Raven left her family to attend St. Michael's Residential School in Alert Bay, BC. While there, she experienced hunger, loneliness, shame, and isolation from her language and her culture. Even years later, as a grown woman and Elder, she has nightmares about her time at the school. But by sharing her story with Little Wolf and her grandchildren, White Raven begins to heal and brings the family closer together. Through simple, heartfelt text and vivid illustrations that combine contemporary and traditional Indigenous motifs, *White Raven* is an engaging teaching tool as well as a relatable narrative about the impact of intergenerational trauma on families. Based on the author's own life and her mother's residential school experience, the central message of this book is one of healing and family unity.
- **Fatty Legs** by Margaret-Olemaun Pokiak-Fenton - This powerful story is about an eight-year-old Inuvialuit girl standing up to the bullies while keeping her Inuit spirit intact. This takes place in a residential school in the far North.
- **Dear Canada: These are my Words: The Residential School Diary of Violet Pesheens** - Acclaimed author Ruby Slipperjack shares a haunting novel about a 12-year-old girl's experience at a residential boarding school in 1966. In her notebook, she records all of her worries, heartbreaks, and memories. But maybe there is hope at the end of the tunnel!

- **My Name is Seepeetza** by Shirley Sterling - At six years old Seepeetza is taken from her happy family life to live as a boarder at the Kamloops Indian Residential School where she manages to find some bright spots to make her school life more bearable.

High School (Grades 10-12)

- **Speaking Our Truth** by Monique Gray Smith - Acclaimed Indigenous author Monique Gray Smith shares the stories of survivors and listens to allies who put the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into action.
- **The Witness Blanket** by Carey Newman- Artist Carey Newman created the Witness Blanket to make sure that history is never forgotten. The Blanket is a living work of art—a collection of hundreds of objects from those schools. It includes everything from photos, bricks, hockey skates, graduation certificates, dolls and piano keys to braids of hair. Behind every piece is a story. And behind every story is a residential school Survivor, including Carey's father. This book is a collection of truths about what happened at those schools, but it's also a beacon of hope and a step on the journey toward reconciliation.
- **Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Schools** by Pamela Rose Toulouse - This book is for all teachers and families who are looking for ways to respectfully infuse residential school history, treaty education and Indigenous perspectives and contributions. The author shares a holistic approach that facilitates relationship building
- **The Reason You Walk** by Wab Kinew (Grade 12) - When his father was diagnosed with terminal cancer, Winnipeg broadcaster and musician Wab Kinew decided to spend a year reconnecting with the accomplished but distant aboriginal man who'd raised him. The Reason You Walk spans 2012, chronicling painful moments in the past and celebrating renewed hopes and dreams for the future. As Kinew revisits his childhood in Winnipeg and on a reserve in Northern Ontario, he learns more about his father's traumatic childhood at a residential school. An intriguing doubleness marks The Reason You Walk, referencing an Anishinaabe ceremonial song. Born to an Anishinaabe father and a non-native mother, he has a foot in both cultures. He is a Sundancer, an academic, a former rapper, a hereditary chief, and an urban activist. His father, Tobasonakwut, was a beloved traditional chief and a respected elected leader who engaged directly with Ottawa. Internally divided, his father embraced traditional Native religion and Catholicism, the religion shared with him at the residential school where he experienced abuse. In a grand gesture of reconciliation, Kinew's father invited the Roman Catholic bishop of Winnipeg to a Sundance ceremony where he adopted him as his brother. Kinew writes affectingly of his struggles in his twenties to find the right path, eventually giving up a self-destructive lifestyle to passionately pursue music and martial arts. The Reason You Walk is a poignant story of a towering but damaged father and son journeying to repair their family bond. Both lighthearted and solemn, Kinew gives us an inspiring vision for family and cross-cultural reconciliation and a broader conversation about the future of First Nations peoples.
- **The Truth About Stories** by Thomas King - Beginning with a traditional Native oral story, King weaves his way through literature, history, religion, politics, and popular culture, elucidating North America's relationship with its Native Peoples.

How the Church is Responding

Here are some sample church teachings where pastors have partnered with Indigenous communities to help build bridges towards reconciliation.

Living Waters Church Series: We Are Kwantlen

- [Happiness: 7 Traditional Laws](#)
- [Humbleness: 7 Traditional Laws](#)

North American Baptist Conference

- [Let the Sermon Be Interrupted: The Church, First Nations, and Reconciliation](#)

North Shore Alliance Church

- [Listening to Our Indigenous Friends](#)

Canadian Baptist International

- [Walking Together in a Good Way—Moving Toward Wholeness Article](#)

Ministries Grace Baptist Church

- [How Should a Christian Respond to Canadian Injustices Against Indigenous Peoples](#)

Jericho Ridge Community Church

- [In Search of Both Truth and Reconciliation Article](#)

Prayers and Liturgy

- [Canadian Catholic Indigenous Council](#)
- [Mission Creek Alliance Church](#)

These are only a few samples; however, many churches are doing great work in this area. We would encourage you to ask your local churches how they are engaging with Indigenous partners in your local community.



**National Day for
Truth *and* Reconciliation**

Website Resources

Due to the sensitive nature of Truth and Reconciliation Day topics, we recommend that parents guide their students in conversations while using these suggested resources.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Each year, September 30th marks the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) and [Orange Shirt Day](#). Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of “Every Child Matters”.

Taking Truth to Action

National Truth and Reconciliation is providing [Taking Truth to Action](#), pre-recorded sessions open to all schools across Canada, that support free, age-appropriate education curricula for students in grades 1-12. Students will have the opportunity to learn directly from residential school Survivors, Indigenous artists and athletes, and other subject matter experts. Learning topics include the truths, history, and impacts of the Residential School System and what learners and educators can do to take action toward reconciliation.

Canadian Geographic’s Education Indigenous Resources

The [Can Geo Education website](#) contains resources to support education as a tool for reconciliation. Students can interact with Google Earth Voyager stories to learn about Canada’s residential schools, original place names, and Indigenous cultural heritage. Other resources include [Paths to Reconciliation](#), a website charting residential schools not yet recognized by the Canadian federal government, and [Re: Location](#), an interactive website to learn about the history of Indigenous community relocation across Canada.



Create to Learn

[Create to Learn](#) is a video-based resource featuring online tutorials on digital skills and traditional knowledge using digital tools. All videos and resources are created by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

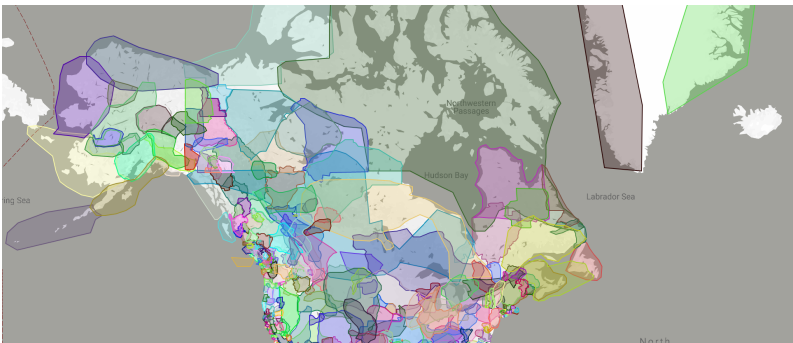
artists and creatives to showcase their skills. Topics include:

- Health & Well-Being
- Writing
- Video & Film
- Visual Arts
- Game Design
- Drones
- Music & Songwriting
- Entrepreneurship & Design
- Photography & Photoshop
- Cultural Teachings

Whose Land

Explore the [Whose Land website](#) to learn about the territory your home or business is situated on, find information for a land acknowledgement, and learn about the treaties and agreements signed across Canada. Educational videos are available to watch, which will give you a better understanding of why land acknowledgements are important and the way Indigenous people view their relationship to land. The app consists of six different maps of Indigenous territories, Treaties, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. Each community's location will eventually host a land acknowledgement video and other information that the community would like to include on their page. The website showcases lesson ideas for students across Kindergarten to Grade 12:

- [K-Grade 5 lesson plan](#)
- [Grades 6-9 lesson plan](#)
- [Grades 10-12 lesson plan](#)



Additional Resources

- Promise Keepers Canada—[A Sombre Summer Article](#)
- [Roots and Routes](#) - Video-based Lesson Plan Bundle Grades 9-12
- Vancouver School of Theology—[Every Child Matters by Ray Aldred](#)
- Legacy of Hope—[Where are the Children?](#)
- [Truth & Reconciliation Commission Reading Challenge](#)
- [The National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education](#)