

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION / ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Resources for Catholic Teachers

Each year, September 30 marks the **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** (NDTR) and **Orange Shirt Day**.

NDTR honours the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of this tragic and painful history, as well as the continued impact of residential schools on Indigenous communities across Canada, is a vital component of immediate and meaningful Truth and Reconciliation.

Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led, grassroots day of commemoration, intended to raise awareness of the individual, family, community, and intergenerational pain and trauma caused by Canada's residential school system, and to champion the message that **every child matters**. Inspired by the accounts of Phyllis Jack Webstad, whose personal clothing – including an orange shirt – was taken from her when she was sent to a residential school, the orange shirt is a symbol of the devastation that residential schools inflicted on Indigenous communities through systematic, forced assimilation.

On **Monday, September 30**, we encourage all Catholic teachers, students, and communities to wear orange to honour the Survivors of residential schools and their families, as well as the children who did not return home, and to confront systemic, anti-Indigenous racism in our society.

As teachers, we have a responsibility to take action in our classrooms and communities to champion the message that every child matters. As part of this commitment to action, we strongly encourage all Catholic teachers to engage with their students in the important and necessary discussions of the histories of Indigenous peoples and Canada's residential school system.

To support you in your learning, instructional practices, and our shared commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, please find below a collection of resources to support NDTR- and Orange Shirt Day-specific activities.

The stars representing the child who never made it home from residential schools.

The circle and the pathway representing the spirit of, and road to, Reconciliation.



As always, you are encouraged to approach discussions and activities regarding these issues [in a culturally safe, trauma aware, and identity-affirming way](#).

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

» [Facing History & Ourselves – Orange Shirt Day Activities](#)

To assist with your preparations for Orange Shirt Day and NDTR, [Facing History & Ourselves](#) has highlighted important resources and teaching ideas to help you engage your students in deeper discussions.

- **Recorded Webinar:** Deepen your understanding of the gendered impact of colonialization in Canada through this [recorded webinar with Dr. Karine Duhamel](#).
- **Teaching Ideas:** [Five Teaching Ideas for Whole School Learning](#) for Orange Shirt Day.
- **Video:** Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, discusses [what it means to work toward reconciliation in Canada](#).

» [Truth and Reconciliation Week](#)

Organized by the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) (NCTR), [Truth and Reconciliation Week 2024](#) (September 23 to 27, 2024) is a national program open to all schools across Canada. Join NCTR in memorializing the children lost to the residential school system and honouring Survivors and their families. Learning and commemorating the truth of our history from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Knowledge Keepers is an important part of the path to Reconciliation.

Truth and Reconciliation Week 2024 includes daily lunch and learn webinars and free virtual educational programming for teachers and students in Grades 1-12.

» [British Columbia Teachers' Federation – Beyond September 30 Resource](#)

What is one small action you could take to advance the work of Truth and Reconciliation? What is one small thing you could do in your school community? These are a couple of the questions explored by participants of a panel event organized by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. The resource book, *Beyond September 30: Doing the Work*, outlines some responses and suggestions from panelists.

» [Canada's History – Every Child Matters Educational Package](#)

The publication, *Every Child Matters: Reconciliation Through Education*, and the complementary "Educator's Guide" are designed to support teachers and students in their learning journey. The activities are intended to encourage student inquiry and investigation, while also supporting action-based learning.



Each lesson is based on one of the seven teachings, reminding all of us that love, truth, wisdom, humility, courage, respect, and honesty truly matter.

Every Child Matters: Reconciliation Through Education was produced in collaboration with the NCTR and award-winning Indigenous author Monique Gray Smith.

» [Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation Teacher Resource Guides](#)

The Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation Teacher Resource Guides for Grades 5, 10, and 11/12 were developed by the [First Nations Education Steering Committee](#) and the [First Nations Schools Association](#). They are a response to the call by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada for education bodies to develop age-appropriate educational materials about Indian residential schools.

» [National Film Board – Truth and Reconciliation](#)

National Film Board – Education has partnered with the NCTR to help teachers educate students about Indigenous realities. This site offers mini lessons on a number of topics, as well as other resources that educators can incorporate into their classrooms.

» [Orange Shirt Society - Teacher Resources](#)

The Orange Shirt Society was founded by Phyllis Jack Webstad and others to share Phyllis' story and promote Orange Shirt Day.

The website contains curriculum and lesson plans for all grades to celebrate Orange Shirt Day.

» [Paths to Reconciliation](#)

Developed by the [Royal Canadian Geographical Society](#) and funded by the Government of Canada's Department of Heritage, Paths to Reconciliation includes a website and a suite of educational resources built from the first-hand accounts of residential school survivors.

» [Resurgence – Engaging with Indigenous Narratives and Cultural Expressions in and Beyond the Classroom](#)

Resurgence is an inspiring collection of contemporary Indigenous poetry, art, and narratives that guides teachers in bridging existing Kindergarten to Grade 12 curricula with Indigenous voices and pedagogies.



» [Secret Path – Lesson Plans and Artwork](#)

Inspired by Chanie Wenjack, and the works of Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire’s “Secret Path” album and artwork, educator Mitch Champagne has developed art and lesson plans to further inspire learning, to adapt to your own social justice-related classroom activities, and to begin or continue a conversation about Reconciliation.

» [Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools](#)

Stolen Lives is a program that walks students and teachers through an examination of the devastating legacy of Indian Residential Schools. Students make the essential connection between the history of Canada and their world today.

» [Truth and Reconciliation in the Classroom Student Resources](#)

FNMIÉAO helps educators understand issues related to Indigenous peoples and offers strategies for teaching this content to all learners.

The website contains classroom resources for both elementary and secondary teachers.

PODCAST

» [Anti-Racist Educator Reads, with Colinda Clyne](#)

A podcast for educators who understand that we need to be talking about race and racism in schools now. Each week, host Colinda Clyne invites educational leaders to be in conversation about sections of selected texts, discussing historical contexts and connections to education.

Colinda has a three-episode series on “Why Indigenous Literatures Matter.”

VIDEOS

» [Canadian Shame: A History of Residential Schools](#)

Ginger Gosnell-Myers, of Nisga’a and Kwakwaka’wakw heritage, is a policy expert, researcher, and activist whose work focuses on removing barriers between Indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

In this 2017 TEDxVancouver presentation, Ginger discusses her family’s experience with Canada’s residential school system and how Canadians can move forward towards Truth and Reconciliation.



>> [Namwayut: We Are All One. Truth and Reconciliation in Canada](#)

Chief Robert Joseph shares his experience as a residential school Survivor and discusses the importance of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.

>> [Film: “We Were Children”](#)

In this feature film, the profound impact of Canada’s residential school system is conveyed through the eyes of two children who were forced to face hardships beyond their years.

>> [Senator Murray Sinclair: How Can Canadians Work Toward Reconciliation?](#)

In this *CBC News* video, watch Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, as he discusses the ways by which Canadians can use the commission’s [Calls to Action](#) to work toward meaningful Reconciliation.

>> [What is Reconciliation?](#)

In this short video, CBC Kids News contributor Isabel DeRoy Olson discusses the history of Reconciliation, provides a brief explanation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and an overview of the commission’s 94 [Calls to Action](#).

