

Walking Side by Side

A Healing Journey
for Children and Youth

by Barbara Strang



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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The Presbyterian Church in Canada's mission study for children and youth

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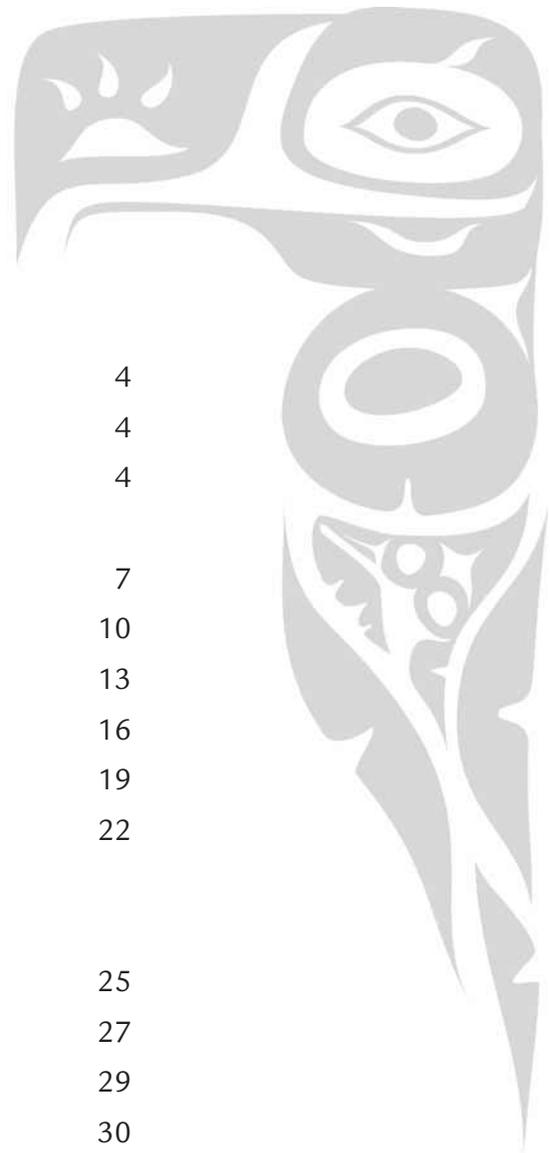
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Contents

Background	4
Introduction to this study	4
Instructions for leaders	4
Session 1 – Hurting and Being Sad	7
Session 2 – Being Honest and Telling the Truth	10
Session 3 – Saying You’re Sorry and Showing You Mean It	13
Session 4 – Being Fair and Sharing	16
Session 5 – Making Friends and Getting to Know Them	19
Session 6 – Trusting God and Being Hopeful	22
Session Activity Sheets and Handouts	
Session 1 – Activity Sheet 1	25
Session 1 – Activity Sheet 2	27
Session 1 – Activity Sheet 3	29
Session 1 – Activity Sheet 4	30
Session 2 – Activity Sheet 1	31
Session 2 – Activity Sheet 2	32
Session 2 – Handout	34
Session 2 – Activity Sheet 3	36
Session 3 – Activity Sheet 1	37
Session 3 – Activity Sheet 2	39
Session 3 – Activity Sheet 3	40
Session 3 – Activity Sheet 4	41
Session 4 – Activity Sheet 1	42
Session 5 – Handout	44
Session 5 – Activity Sheet 1	45
Session 6 – Activity Sheet 1	46
Session 6 – Activity Sheet 2	48





Background

For more than a century and a half, from the mid-1800s until 1996, Aboriginal children in Canada were separated from their families and communities to attend residential schools in an effort to assimilate them into mainstream culture. The Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement has identified 139 such schools across the country. More than 150,000 children attended. At least 4,000 died of disease or while trying to escape and return to their families.

It is estimated that some 80,000 residential school survivors are alive today. There are no current estimates of the number of residential school survivors' children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, many of whom have been very directly affected by the experiences of their family members.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada operated 11 schools from 1884 until 1969, when the Government of Canada took over their administration.



Birtle Residential School, 1931

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
Archives, C-6-SB-18

Introduction to this study

Residential schools and their impact on people's lives are a part of our history. If we hope to achieve healing and reconciliation in future generations, it is critical that today's children learn about the schools, the experiences of children there, and the legacy of the system. The children in our congregations have the opportunity to help right the wrongs of past generations.

Additionally, this journey has life lessons for all children, helping them to live out the teachings of Jesus. The readings and activities in this study will help children walk the path of respectful relationship with other children, with themselves and with God.

Instructions for leaders

Preparation Required for Each Session

- ◆ One chair for each participant, arranged in a circle
- ◆ Activity tables and chairs
- ◆ Poster-sized drawing of the cross, affixed to a wall
- ◆ Index-sized cards and markers, coloured pencils or crayons arranged on the activity tables
- ◆ Rolls of masking tape for affixing cards to the drawing of the cross
- ◆ An object of special significance to the leader or the group, that can be held in the children's hands as they speak – the 'speaking object'. A natural object such as a stone, gem, or stick is a particularly good speaking object.
- ◆ An instrument to accompany singing, if there is someone in the group able to prepare and play the pieces (alternatively you could have a drum present and ask a different child to accompany each song).

Leading Discussion

In each session, sample questions are included to help you facilitate discussion in the sharing circle. These are designed to give you ideas of what to talk about. Use them only if needed. Depending on the ages and personalities of the children in your group, you will have to adjust how much leading and prompting is required.

Activity Sheets and Handouts

Activity sheets and handouts are provided at the end of the study. You will generally only need to print one copy of an activity sheet. You will need to print multiple copies – one copy per participant – of any handouts.

Book – *The Sharing Circle: Stories about First Nations Culture*

The Sharing Circle is an illustrated children’s book that we recommend for the 5th session of this mission study. It is a wonderful story that speaks of Aboriginal cultural traditions and the joy of sharing these traditions with friends. It is recommended for ages 4-8, but it is interesting enough to be used with older children.

This book would be a wonderful resource for your church library. It is available for sale through The Book Room or may be available from your local library. It is recommended that you arrange to purchase or borrow this book as you prepare to undertake the mission study, so that you will have it on hand for Session 5.

The Book Room
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
www.thebookroom.ca

Phone: 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 x239
Fax: 416-441-2825
Email: bookroom@presbyterian.ca
Hours: Mon - Fri: 9am - 4:00pm (Free Parking)

Terminology

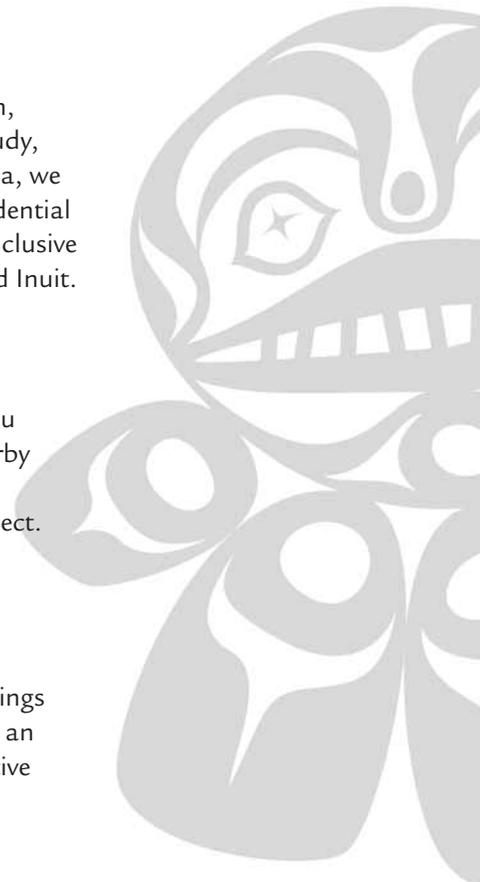
There are many words commonly used in reference to the first peoples of Canada: Indian, Indigenous, Native, Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis and Inuit. For the purpose of this study, and in keeping with the language of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, we will generally use the collective term Aboriginal peoples in relation to the children of residential schools, their families, communities and nations. Aboriginal is used by the TRC as it is inclusive of the three Constitutionally-recognized first peoples of Canada: First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Aboriginal Territory

In each session you will acknowledge the Aboriginal territory that you are meeting on. You can find this out by contacting the local Aboriginal friendship centre, association or nearby Aboriginal community. Check out the National Association of Friendship Centres list at www.nafc.ca. Even if it is challenging to determine this, it is an important gesture of respect.

Aboriginal Spirituality and the Sharing Circle

While our tradition of learning as Christians is based on the reading of scripture, we acknowledge and encourage respect for the tradition of learning Aboriginal sacred teachings through relationship with Elders. There is no written doctrine of these teachings. Inviting an Elder to speak to the children about their culture and spiritual beliefs is encouraged. Native Friendship Centres will have contact information for Elders who offer cultural teachings.



In Christianity, acts such as communion and symbols such as the cross are held sacred. We have gained an understanding of their significance through experience. We must respect the significance of Aboriginal sacred practices and symbols and know that to appropriate them without understanding is an offence to those for whom they have sacred meaning.

Some Aboriginal communities use a sharing circle as a way to respectfully share their experiences and listen to one another. The way that sharing circles are carried out and the meanings behind the methodology vary in different communities. It is commonly understood that circles symbolize completeness and equality; there is no hierarchy in a circle.

We have taken inspiration from an Aboriginal sharing circle for the physical set up of our gatherings and for the practice of respectful sharing. In our sharing circle:

- ◆ All the children sit facing one another in the circle.
- ◆ A 'speaking object' is used to allow the children to share their thoughts. Children are to listen to one another, and only speak when they have the speaking object.
- ◆ The speaking object is passed around the group in a clockwise direction, which represents the path of the sun in the sky. Children can pass the object on to the next child without saying anything if they do not wish to speak.

Offering Project

The Presbyterian Church in Canada's native ministries (listed in Session 3, Activity Sheet 3) work to restore relationships and provide vital services to Aboriginal people in Canada. Raising funds to support these ministries is a concrete action the children can do in response to this mission study. These funds will help our native ministries run counselling, healing circles, parenting classes and after-school programs and provide shelter, food, clothing and other basic needs. You may want to take up an offering each week or hold a special event to raise funds together. Involving adults in the congregation in the offering project can raise even more money!

Use these examples to help the children see what their gifts can accomplish.

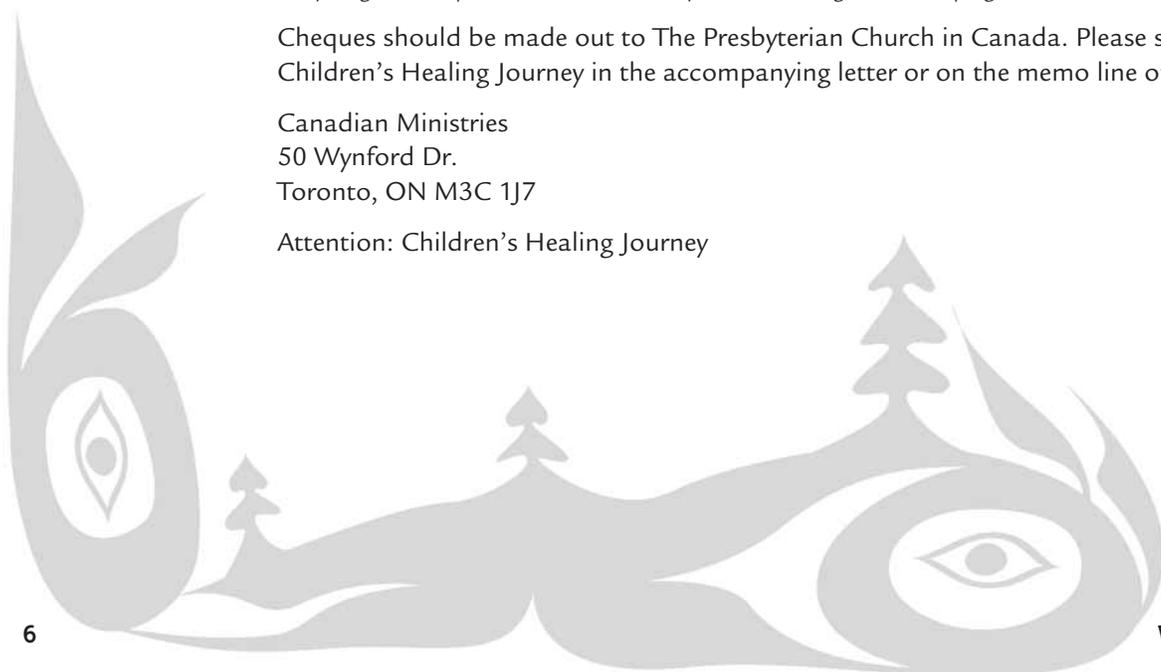
- ◆ \$10 provides a meal for someone who is homeless
- ◆ \$25 provides a basket of food
- ◆ \$50 supports counselling and parenting classes
- ◆ \$100 buys books and supplies for students completing their high school equivalency
- ◆ \$150 provides food for a cooking class

Note: These financial examples show what a donation can achieve. It is important to note that actual costs may fluctuate and your gift will help the native ministries carry out the overall goals of their programs.

Cheques should be made out to The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Please specify CM24 – Children's Healing Journey in the accompanying letter or on the memo line of the cheque.

Canadian Ministries
50 Wynford Dr.
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Attention: Children's Healing Journey



Hurting and Being Sad



The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, G-5475-FC-16

Classroom (Grades 2 and 3), Cecilia Jeffrey School, c.1950-1953

Learning Objectives

In this session the children will learn about the residential schools and how they hurt Aboriginal children. Through the story of a young boy and his grandmother, the children will learn about one woman's experience. They will explore what it means to be sad, and share their feelings in a sharing circle. They will discover that they can share their sad feelings with God, and that God always listens and supports us.

At the end of this session children will:

- ◆ Be able to answer the question 'What were the residential schools?'
- ◆ Begin to understand that many Aboriginal children were hurt by the residential schools and that our church was a part of that experience.
- ◆ Be able to find ways of expressing sadness in words and images.

Preparation

- ◆ Print Session 1 activity sheets.
- ◆ Set up the chairs and tables in a circle, affix the poster of the cross, prepare the tables for the drawing and writing activity by arranging the index cards and markers.



Welcome

- ◆ Welcome the children with the following words, or convey the contents in your own words:

Welcome children! For the next few weeks we are going to learn about schools called “residential schools”. For almost 150 years Aboriginal children were sent to these schools. Aboriginal people are the first people who lived on the land we now call Canada – long before people from Europe and other parts of the world came to live here. Today we are meeting on the traditional territory of the (insert name of Aboriginal people) people. While some children may have had good experiences in residential schools, many did not, and for some children it was very, very bad. No matter what, the school system was harmful because children and parents were separated, and families and communities were broken up.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada took part in running some of these schools for almost 100 years. While we stopped running them in the 1960s – which is a long time ago now – many Aboriginal families still remember the schools, and it changed their lives forever. Over the next few weeks we are going to learn about the schools and how we can help heal the hurt they caused.

Today we are going to talk about the sadness children felt, and about what it is like to feel sad.

- ◆ Introduce the ‘speaking object’. Explain why this object is special to you. Explain that during the sharing/discussion portion of the sessions this object will be held by each child as she or he speaks, then passed on, always in a clock-wise direction, to the next person in the circle. Explain that the clockwise direction represents the path of the sun in the sky. Let the children know that they can pass the object on if they don’t wish to speak. When the object has made its rounds and all have had the chance to speak, you, as leader, will take the object, ask if anyone has anything else to say and hand the speaking object to anyone wishing to speak again. Explain that this way of talking to one another is inspired by the practice of an Aboriginal sharing circle.

Welcoming God to Be With Us

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today. We remember Jesus who was so brave and who did so much to teach us about being fair and caring for each other. We welcome the Holy Spirit who is with us now so that your love can flow into us and help us to be strong and understand the feelings of others. Amen.

I Hear This Important Message

Story Time

- ◆ Review the unfamiliar vocabulary from Tanis and Atsoo (Session 1, Activity Sheet 1). Either print and post the cards from the activity sheet or write the words on a blackboard or flipchart to serve as visual reminders for the children as you read the story.
- ◆ Read the story *Tanis and Atsoo* (Session 1, Activity Sheet 2). Older youth may want to also read *A Healing Journey* by Elder Audrey Bone (Session 1, Activity Sheet 3). This first-hand account of a woman who attended the Cecilia Jeffrey School in Birtle, Manitoba complements the story of Tanis and Atsoo.

Scripture Reading

- ◆ Matthew 2:13-15 – Mary and Joseph flee with Jesus to Egypt.

Sharing

- ◆ Ask the children to pass the speaking object around the circle and discuss what they have learned today. Use these questions to encourage discussion, if needed:
 - How would you feel if you had to leave your family and go to a school like the one Atsoo attended?
 - Atsoo described some experiences that were not very nice. Which of these would you find the most difficult? Why?
 - How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they had to flee with Jesus to Egypt? How do you think Aboriginal parents felt about their children being taken away from them?
- ◆ Talk about the fact that we all feel sad sometimes. Ask the children if they have a favourite stuffed animal, piece of music, etc. that comforts them when they are sad. Have them each describe their item and, if they are comfortable doing so, tell of a time they were sad. Ensure that they do not feel pressure to speak of their own experience if they do not want to.

Getting Into It

Images and Words to Share with God

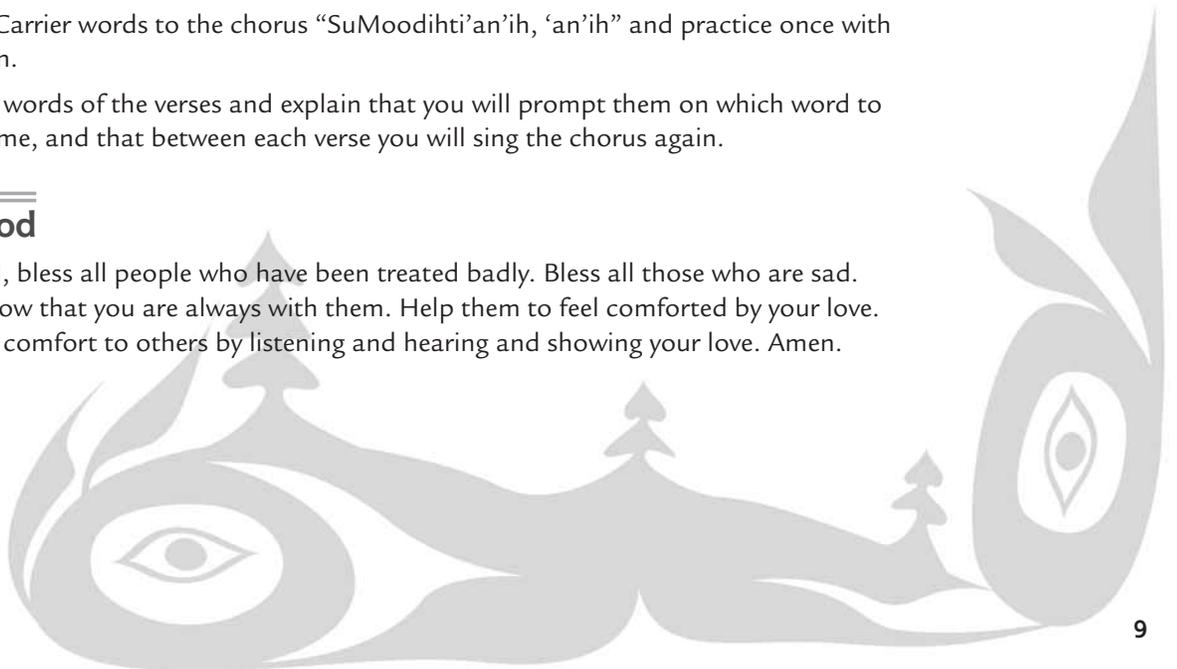
- ◆ Show the children the poster with the cross, and explain that over the course of the sessions they will be writing out cards with words and drawings related to the discussions and that they will stick the cards to the poster. Explain that this is to highlight the fact that when we share our feelings and thoughts with God, God always listens and supports us.
- ◆ Move to the activity tables where you have laid out index cards, markers and masking tape. Ask the children to each take one card and write out words and/or draw pictures that demonstrate sadness. Encourage them to use words and images from the story of Tanis and Atsoo, or from the personal stories that they shared.
- ◆ Have the children tape their cards to the poster of the cross (using rolled tape on the back of the cards).

Singing to God

- ◆ Sing *Kumbaya, My Lord* in Carrier and English (Session 1, Activity Sheet 4)
 - ◇ Sing one verse with the words *Kumbaya* for the children and review the song with them.
 - ◇ Teach the Carrier words to the chorus “SuMoodihti’an’ih, ‘an’ih” and practice once with the children.
 - ◇ Review the words of the verses and explain that you will prompt them on which word to use each time, and that between each verse you will sing the chorus again.

Speaking to God

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, bless all people who have been treated badly. Bless all those who are sad. Help them to know that you are always with them. Help them to feel comforted by your love. Help us to bring comfort to others by listening and hearing and showing your love. Amen.



Being Honest and Telling the Truth



The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, C-3664-fc-31

PCC Moderator the Rev. George Vais presents the PCC's Confession to Phil Fontaine, Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Learning Objectives

This session will help the children learn the importance of telling the truth and explore the idea of being brave. The stories will help them understand how telling the truth about the residential schools helps people heal. The children can experience telling the truth and will discover why The Presbyterian Church in Canada supports telling the truth about the residential schools, even though it may be painful.

By the end of this session the children will:

- ◆ Be able to share why it is important to tell the truth and be able to express this through words and drawings.
- ◆ Understand the sense of strength and freedom that comes from telling the truth.

Preparation

- ◆ Print Session 2 activity sheets and handout.

- ◆ Print the *Confession Cards* (Session 2 Handout) so each child has a copy. Cut one set out and mount on cardboard. Keep this set for use again in Session 3.
- ◆ Set up the chairs in a circle, affix the poster of the cross, prepare the tables for the drawing and writing activity by arranging the index cards and markers.

Welcome

- ◆ Welcome the children with the following words, or convey the contents in your own words:

Welcome children! As we begin today, let us remember the Aboriginal people who originally lived on the land we are meeting on today. Do you remember their name? (Wait for response – or provide). We give thanks that we are able to use this land. Today, as we continue to learn about residential schools, we are going to talk about telling the truth and about how sometimes we have to be brave to do so.

Welcoming God to Be With Us

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today. We remember Jesus who was so brave and who did so much to teach us about being fair and caring for each other. We welcome the Holy Spirit who is with us now so that your love can flow into us and make us strong and brave to be honest and tell the truth. Amen.

I Hear This Important Message

Story Time

- ◆ Read *Speaking the Truth About Residential Schools* (Session 2, Activity Sheet 1) AND/OR *The Truth Can Set You Free* (Session 2, Activity Sheet 2)

Confession Cards

- ◆ Explain that in 1994 The Presbyterian Church in Canada decided to tell the truth about its role in the residential schools. Explain that it wrote its confession and presented it to Chief Fontaine at a national event in Winnipeg that year. Depending on the ages of the children in your group, distribute the *Confession Cards* (Session 2 Handout) and have the children read them aloud one by one, or read them out for the children.

Scripture Reading

- ◆ Ephesians 4:15 – Speak the truth in love.

Sharing

- ◆ Ask the children to pass the speaking object around the circle and discuss what they have learned today. Use these questions to encourage discussion, if needed:
 - Why do you think it is sometimes difficult to tell the truth about an experience that has made you feel bad?
 - Why does it take courage to tell the truth sometimes?
 - What do you think it means to speak the truth in love?
 - What can we all do to help people tell the truth?
 - Why was it important for The Presbyterian Church in Canada to tell the truth about its role in residential schools?



Getting Into It

Telling the Truth

- ◆ Have the children sit in their chairs in a circle. Explain the activity, then lead the children in doing it. One at a time, each child will stand and say: “I promise to tell the truth. I promise not to lie or hide the facts. I am courageous and strong.” After saying the words, the child needs to strike a pose that conveys strength and power. Have all the other children applaud. Go around the circle until every child has struck a pose.

Images and Words to Share with God

- ◆ Move to the activity tables where you have laid out index cards, markers and masking tape. Ask the children to each take one card and write out words and/or draw pictures that demonstrate being courageous and truthful. Encourage them to use words and images from the stories they have heard and from their activity. Have the children tape their cards to the poster of the cross (using rolled tape on the back of the cards).

Singing to God

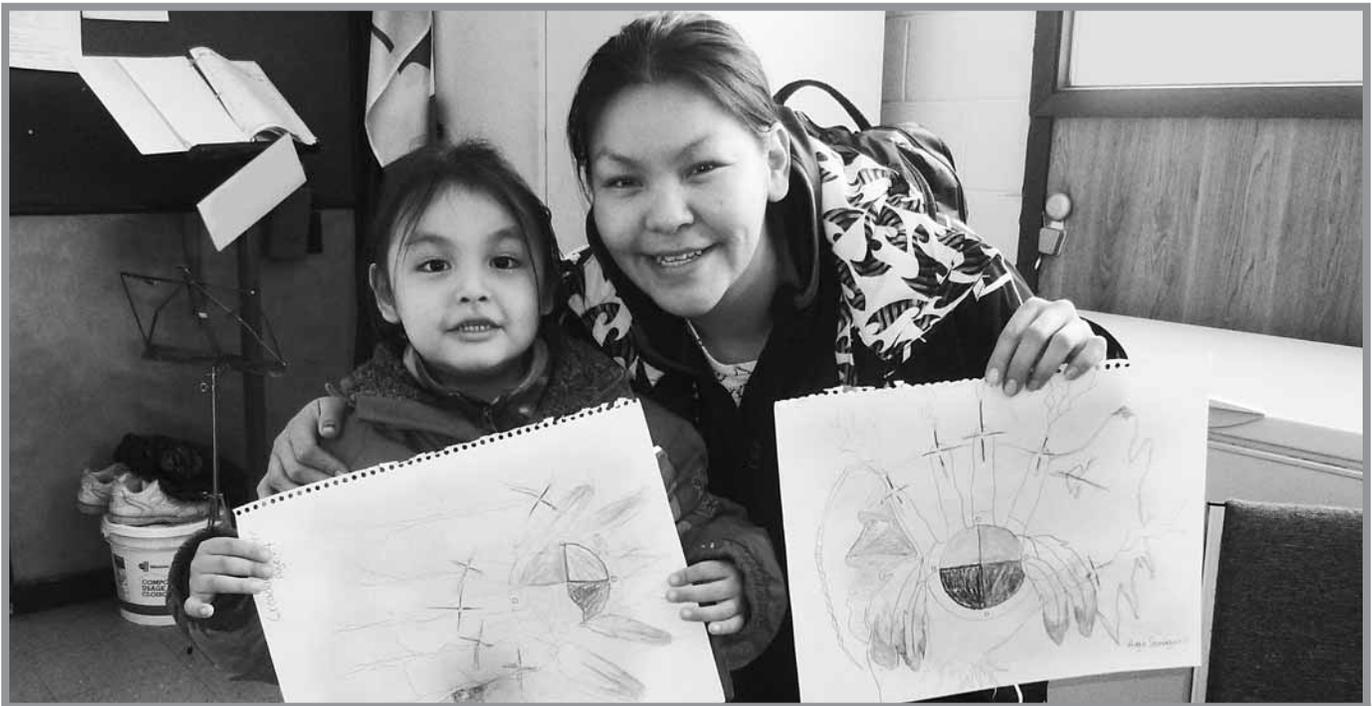
- ◆ Sing *This Little Light of Mine* (Session 2, Activity Sheet 3)

Speaking to God

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, we pray for all who are keeping secrets. Thank you for loving us and forgiving us, even when we are scared to share the truth. Give all of us strength and courage so that we can tell the truth. Help all of us to be champions of truth, even when it is difficult. Amen.



Saying You're Sorry and Showing You Mean It



Art class participants at Edmonton Urban Native Ministry

Learning Objectives

This session will help the children learn about making a sincere apology when they have hurt someone. They will learn how the Government of Canada apologized for what happened in the residential schools, and about The Presbyterian Church in Canada's confession, and why these are important. They will learn why our church confessed and about how we are working toward healing and reconciliation and taking positive action to support people who were hurt.

By the end of this session the children will:

- ◆ Be able to talk about the Biblical example of Zacchaeus, and how he showed he was sorry for the hurt that he caused.
- ◆ Understand ways they could apologize to people they have hurt.

Preparation

- ◆ Print Session 3 activity sheets.
- ◆ Have the *Confession Cards* (Session 2 Handout) which you mounted on cardboard in Session 2 ready.

- 
- ◆ If you are showing any of the YouTube videos, you will need a computer and an internet connection. Make sure the videos will play.
 - ◆ Set up the chairs in a circle, affix the poster of the cross and prepare the tables for the drawing and writing activity by arranging the index cards and markers.

Welcome

- ◆ Welcome the children with the following words, or convey the contents in your own words:

Welcome children! As we begin today, let us remember the Aboriginal people who originally lived on the land we are meeting on today. Do you remember their name? (Wait for response – or provide). We give thanks that we are able to use this land. Today, as we continue to learn about residential schools, we are going to talk about apologizing sincerely (saying you're sorry) and about what you can do when you do something wrong.

Welcoming God to Be With Us

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today. We remember Jesus who was so brave and who did so much to teach us about being fair and caring for each other. We welcome the Holy Spirit who is with us now so that your love can flow into us and make us strong and caring. Amen.

I Hear This Important Message

The Apology Play

- ◆ Facilitate the acting out of *The Apology Play* (Session 3, Activity Sheet 1)

The Facts

- ◆ Read the Apology of the Government of Canada (Session 3, Activity Sheet 2). Read it a second time and ask the children to count the number of times the prime minister said “we apologize” or “we are sorry”.
- ◆ Explain that The Presbyterian Church in Canada also apologized in the confession it made to Aboriginal peoples in 1994. Read the Confession Cards from Session 2 (Session 2 Handout) and have the children say together ‘We ask Forgiveness’ after reading each card.
- ◆ *Additional activity for Grades 3-6:* If you have the time and ability to show video footage, play one of the following videos from:
 - ◆ “The Aboriginal Apology” posted by 100huntley on May 31, 2010 (5:23 mins). It can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnFQO9R2U1U.
 - ◆ “Canada apologizes for residential school system” posted by Canuck Politics (10:41 mins). Found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ryC74bbrEE. (This version includes the addresses of the leaders of the Liberal Party, the NDP, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Inuit Tapiriit.)

Scripture Reading

- ◆ Luke 19: 1-10 – A tax collector recognizes that he has hurt people and shows he is sorry with his actions.

Sharing

- ◆ Ask the children to pass the speaking object around the circle and discuss what they have learned today. Use these questions to encourage discussion, if needed:
 - What did you learn from the apology play?
 - Why do you think it is important to apologize when you have done something wrong? How do you feel after someone has apologized to you? How do you know when the person really means it? What kinds of things do they do that let you know they are really sorry?
 - What did Zacchaeus do when he realized he had been hurting people by being dishonest when collecting their taxes?
 - What does it mean that the Canadian Government and Presbyterian Church in Canada apologized?

Getting Into It

Native Ministries

- ◆ Using Session 3, Activity Sheet 3, talk to the children about the native ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Explain that these ministries support Aboriginal people and help people who were hurt by the experience of residential schools. They are one way our church supports healing and reconciliation.

Images and Words to Share with God

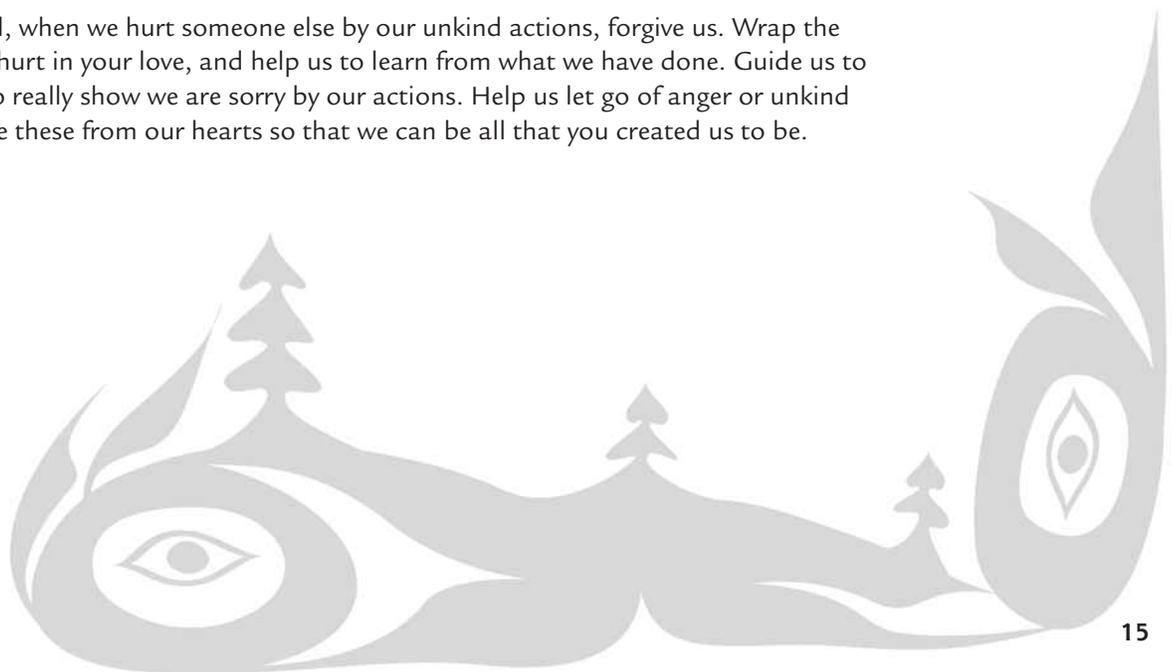
- ◆ Move to the activity tables where you have laid out index cards, markers and masking tape. Ask the children to each take one card and write out words and/or draw pictures that demonstrate saying sorry and making up for doing wrong. Encourage them to use words and images from the passages they have heard. Have the children tape their cards to the poster of the cross (using rolled tape on the back of the cards).

Singing to God

- ◆ Sing Hymn #201 – *We come to ask your forgiveness*

Speaking to God

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, when we hurt someone else by our unkind actions, forgive us. Wrap the person we have hurt in your love, and help us to learn from what we have done. Guide us to apologize and to really show we are sorry by our actions. Help us let go of anger or unkind thoughts; release these from our hearts so that we can be all that you created us to be. Amen.



Being Fair and Sharing



Rev. Mary Fontaine (left) leads a sharing circle through Hummingbird Ministries, a ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada promoting healing between First Nations and church communities

Learning Objectives

In this session the children will learn about being fair and sharing. They will explore the idea of abundance and discover that by sharing, they make room to receive more. They will learn about the treaties that were made and broken with Aboriginal peoples and how we need to work to share all of the good that there is in our country. They will learn how God blessed what a young child shared, so that there was enough for all and more left over.

By the end of the session the children will be able to:

- ◆ Share how treaties with Aboriginal peoples were made and broken.
- ◆ Articulate what being fair is and why it is important to share.
- ◆ Tell the Bible's story of the young boy whose sharing of his loaves and fish led to abundant food for thousands.

Session-Specific Materials Needed

- ◆ Small plastic or paper cups
- ◆ A pitcher
- ◆ Wrapped candies (Note: Be aware of allergies in your group.)
- ◆ Optional – small baggies the children can use to take candies home

Preparation

- ◆ Print Session 4 activity sheets.
- ◆ Set up the chairs in a circle, affix the poster of the cross, prepare the tables for the drawing and writing activity by arranging the index cards and markers.
- ◆ Prepare the cups.
- ◆ Fill the pitcher with candies.

Welcome

- ◆ Welcome the children with the following words, or convey the contents in your own words:

Welcome children! As we begin today, let us remember the Aboriginal people who originally lived on the land we are meeting on today. Do you remember their name? (Wait for response – or provide). We give thanks that we are able to use this land. Today, as we continue to learn about residential schools, we are going to talk about being fair, about sharing, and about a beautiful word: “abundance”.

Welcoming God to Be With Us

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today. We remember Jesus who was so brave and who did so much to teach us about being fair and caring for each other. Thank you for creating a world where there is enough for all. We welcome the Holy Spirit who is with us now so that your love can flow into us and help us be fair and share with others. Amen.

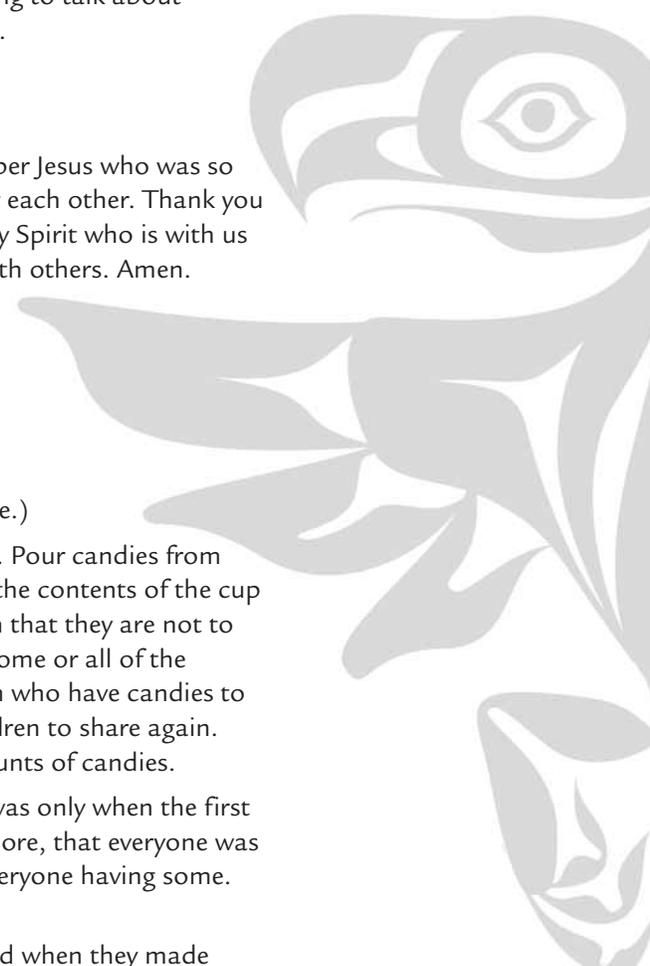
I Hear This Important Message

Blanket Exercise

- ◆ Do the *Making and Breaking Treaties* activity (Session 4, Activity Sheet 1)

Sharing Abundance Activity (This is a neat activity if you have time.)

- ◆ While the children are seated in a circle, hand each child an empty cup. Pour candies from the pitcher into one child’s cup, filling the cup. Ask that child to share the contents of the cup with whomever and however many other children s/he wants. Tell them that they are not to eat any candies until the activity is done. Once this child has emptied some or all of the contents of the cup, fill the same cup again. Now ask all of the children who have candies to share what they have. Fill the first person’s cup again, and ask the children to share again. Continue the exercise until all of the children have relatively equal amounts of candies.
- ◆ After the sharing of contents is done, point out to the children that it was only when the first child shared the contents of their cup that there was room to receive more, that everyone was able to share in the contents of the first cup, and that sharing led to everyone having some. Explain that this is called “abundance”.
- ◆ Explain that this was the idea of sharing that the Aboriginal peoples had when they made the treaties with the Europeans, and later with the Government of Canada. Unfortunately when the Aboriginal peoples shared their land, it was taken away from them and they were mistreated. Imagine what could have happened if we had shared with the Aboriginal peoples like we are sharing these candies now.
- ◆ If desired, give the children instructions about taking the candies home with them (e.g. take the cups, put the candies in baggies).



Scripture Reading

- ◆ John 6:5-13 – The Bible also teaches us how important it is to share. When a small boy shares his five barley loaves and two fish, 5000 people are fed. Explain that this is also an idea of abundance: if we share, we will have enough to share.

Sharing

- ◆ Ask the children to pass the speaking object around the circle and discuss what they have learned today. Use these questions to encourage discussion, if needed:
 - How do you think the Aboriginal peoples feel about how they have been treated in Canada?
 - What do you think Canadians should do now to show respect for Aboriginal peoples and for the treaties that were made?

Getting Into It

Images and Words to Share with God

- ◆ Move to the activity tables where you have laid out index cards, markers and masking tape. Ask the children to each take one card and write out words and/or draw pictures that demonstrate being fair and sharing. Encourage them to use words and images from the passages they have heard and from their activity. Have the children tape their cards to the poster of the cross (using rolled tape on the back of the cards).

Singing to God

- ◆ Sing Hymn #301 – *Many and great, O God, are your works* – first verse only – in Cree (teach to the kids and sing verses over and over several times)

Speaking to God

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for giving us many examples of how you want us to share your resources. Forgive us when we want to keep what we have for ourselves or when we take from others. Help us to see that if we share, there will be enough for all. Amen.



Making Friends and Getting to Know Them



A gathering at St. Andrew's Church during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada national event in Saskatoon, SK, 2012

Learning Objectives

In this session the children will learn how non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people are becoming friends. They will explore unfamiliar food and games, and discover that learning new things can be part of the process of making new friends. They will discover what God teaches us about how to really show love.

At the end of this session the children will:

- ◆ Be able to share some aspects of Aboriginal culture.
- ◆ Know what God teaches about love and friendship.

Session-Specific Materials Needed

- ◆ Book – *The Sharing Circle*
- ◆ Ingredients for bannock and/or drum and game pieces for playing Lahal (see Session 5 handout and activity sheets)
- ◆ Plates for eating bannock, serving utensils, etc.



Preparation

- ◆ Print Session 5 activity sheets and handout.
- ◆ Set up the chairs in a circle, affix the poster of the cross, prepare the tables for the drawing and writing activity by arranging the index cards and markers.
- ◆ If making bannock, prepare the cooking and eating space and check for allergies.

Welcome

- ◆ Welcome the children with the following words, or convey the contents in your own words:

Welcome children! As we begin today, let us remember the Aboriginal people who originally lived on the land we are meeting on today. Do you remember their name? (Wait for response – or provide). We give thanks that we are able to use this land. Today, as we continue to learn about residential schools, we are going to talk about making new friends and getting to know them.

Welcoming God to Be With Us

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today. We remember Jesus who was so brave and who did so much to teach us about being fair and caring for each other. We welcome the Holy Spirit who is with us now so that your love can flow into us and help us be good friends. Amen.

I Hear This Important Message

Story Time

- ◆ Read *The Sharing Circle: Stories About First Nations Culture* (see note in the Instructions for Leaders section of this study). Read all seven very short stories about Matthew, a young Aboriginal boy, who treasures the culture and spiritual beliefs of his people and sparks interest for these beliefs in his friend and classmates.
- ◆ **Alternative:** If you can't get a copy of *The Sharing Circle* book, read the first part of *There is Hope* from Session 6 – stopping at “But one day, it looked like things might change...”. (You can read it again in Session 6, to remind them.)

Scripture Reading

- ◆ 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 – A description of true love.

Sharing

- ◆ Ask the children to pass the speaking object around the circle and discuss what they have learned today. Use these questions to encourage discussion, if needed:
 - What do you find most interesting about Matthew's culture? Why? (*The Sharing Circle*)
 - What was important about Nathan and Natalie's friendship? What did they like to do together? How were they different? (*There Is Hope*)
 - What is special about making friends with someone whose traditions are different than yours (e.g. different foods, different games, different spiritual or religious practices)?
 - What does God teach us about love? How does this help us make friends? How is this similar to what we have learned in the stories?

Getting Into It

Bannock

- ◆ Make this traditional Aboriginal bread as a group if you have the facilities and the time. Otherwise, make it in advance and simply serve the bread (with butter and/or jam) to the group. See Session 5 Handout. Distribute copies of the recipe for children to take home.

Lahal (alternative activity)

- ◆ Teach and play the Carrier game called Lahal as per the instructions outlined on Session 5, Activity Sheet 1.

Images and Words to Share with God

- ◆ Clear the tables (if eating bannock) and lay out index cards, markers and masking tape. Ask the children to each take one card and write out words and/or draw pictures that demonstrate making new friends and learning about different cultures. Encourage them to use words and images from the passages they have heard and from their activity. Have the children tape their cards to the poster of the cross (using rolled tape on the back of the cards).

Singing to God

- ◆ Sing Hymn #635 – *Brother, sister let me serve you* verses 1-4

Speaking to God

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for making us all different. Help us to make friends with one another and discover the neat things we all have to share. Forgive us when we have been envious, boastful or judgmental. Help us to love one another as you taught, in ways that are patient, kind and truthful. Amen



Trusting God and Being Hopeful



Presbyterian expression of reconciliation, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada national event, Vancouver, BC, 2013

Learning Objectives

In this session the children will learn about God's promise to never abandon us. They will explore what it means to bridge cultures and together move past the hurt caused by residential schools.

At the end of this session the children will:

- ◆ Understand that talking about things that hurt can help us heal.
- ◆ Be able to share that there is hope for people who experience hurt and sadness, including those who went to the residential schools.

Session-Specific Materials Needed

- ◆ Scarves or blindfolds, one for each child

Preparation

- ◆ Print Session 6 activity sheets.
- ◆ Set up the chairs in a circle, affix the poster of the cross, prepare the tables for the drawing and writing activity by arranging the index cards and markers.

Welcome

- ◆ Welcome the children with the following words, or convey the contents in your own words:

Welcome children! As we begin today, let us remember the Aboriginal people who originally lived on the land we are meeting on today. Do you remember their name? (Wait for response – or provide). We give thanks that we are able to use this land. Today, as we continue to learn about residential schools, we are going to talk about trusting God and remembering God’s promise to us.

Welcoming God to Be With Us

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today. We remember Jesus who was so brave and who did so much to teach us about being fair and caring for each other. We welcome the Holy Spirit who is with us now so that your love can flow into us and make us strong and hopeful. Amen.

I Hear This Important Message

Blindfolded Walk (activity for older children)

- ◆ Ask the children to group themselves into pairs. One group of three is fine if you have an odd number. Put blindfolds on one of the children in each pair. Explain that the other child will lead their blindfolded partner around the room, guiding them to touch things in the room to discover how things feel. Emphasize that they have to make sure that their partner doesn’t walk into anything or anyone. After a while, have the children switch roles.

Story Time

- ◆ Read the story *There is Hope* (Session 6, Activity Sheet 1)

Sharing

- ◆ Ask the children to pass the speaking object around the circle and discuss what they have learned today. Use these questions to encourage discussion, if needed:
 - Talk about what it means to trust. Was it scary to trust the other person, if not why not? Did you trust each other more as the exercise went on? What are you risking when you trust someone? What happens if the person you are trusting lets you down?
 - Why were Nathalie and Nathan friends? Both Nathan and Nathalie were hurt and upset. Why were they upset? What made them feel better?
 - Both Nathan and Nathalie prayed when they were feeling sad. When do you pray to God? What do you say in your prayers?

Getting Into It

Images and Words to Share with God

- ◆ Move to the activity tables where you have laid out index cards, markers and masking tape. Ask the children to each take one card and write out words and/or draw pictures that demonstrate hope and trust in God. Encourage them to use words and images from the passages they have heard and from their activity. Have the children tape their cards to the poster of the cross (using rolled tape on the back of the cards).

Singing to God

- ◆ Sing *I've Got the Joy, Down in my Heart* (Session 6, Activity Sheet 2)

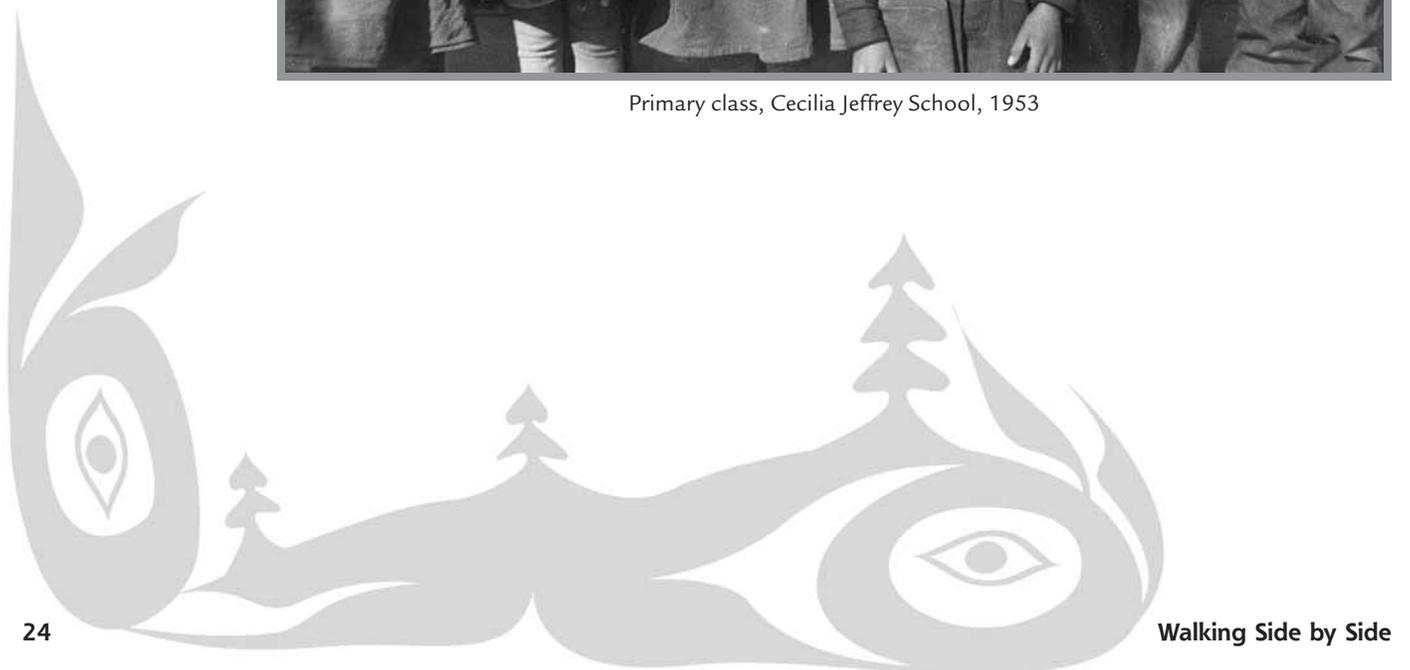
Speaking to God

- ◆ Pray – Dear God, Thank you for helping us learn about residential schools. Thank you for showing us that there is hope – that you can help us all to heal. We know that you are always here for us, when we feel afraid and sad, and when we are happy and excited. We know that you want us to live together in harmony and that you have shown us the way to do so. Help us share your love with all those around us. Amen.



The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, G-5476-FC-109

Primary class, Cecilia Jeffrey School, 1953





Carrier

Nation of people also called Dakelh

Bannock

Traditional bread

Ndazkoh

Place where Tanis lives

Indian Agent

Government worker

Residential School

School for Aboriginal children

Native

Word for first people to live in Canada

Reserve

Land for Aboriginal peoples

Descriptions of words to be explained to children:

Carrier

- First Nation people who live mainly in British Columbia. The Southern Carrier live in the Cariboo/Chilcotin region which is in the Central Interior. There are also Central and Northern Carrier who live in Prince George and West British Columbia.

Bannock

- A traditional bread which is usually fried in a pan.

Ndazkoh

- The name of the place where Tanis and his grandmother live (pronounced Naz-Ko)

Indian Agent

- The local government worker who was responsible for the relationship between Aboriginal communities and the government when Tanis' grandmother was young.

Residential School

- Schools that Aboriginal children had to attend, where they slept in large rooms with other children.

Native

- Another word used to mean the first people who lived on the land we now call Canada.

Reserve

- Land that is just for Aboriginal peoples to live on, where the people form their own community.



Tanis and Atsoo

Story written by Shannon Bell-Wyminga

Nine year old Tanis came in the front door of his log house and dumped his pack on the floor. “What can I have to eat, Atsoo?” he called out. His grandmother, whom he called Atsoo in their Carrier language, was in the kitchen making fresh bannock. She offered him a piece and Tanis sat down at the table to spread butter and blueberry jam on it before taking a big bite. Atsoo asked him how school had been that day.

“It was all right,” Tanis replied. “We had fun on the rink at lunchtime.”

“Atsoo?” Tanis continued. “Did you go to school in Ndazkoh?”

“No.” She said as she sat down with Tanis at the table. “School was very different for me. We couldn’t go to school here in our village. We had to go to a school

many hours away from here and we lived there all year. We didn’t get to live with our parents.” Atsoo fingered her long black braid as she looked out the window. She seemed sad as she talked.

“What was it like?” Tanis asked curiously. He had heard that the elders had gone to church schools, but he hadn’t heard his grandmother talk about it.

Atsoo began to speak quietly, “At the end of every summer, the Indian agent came to take all the children away. I remember when I was too young to go. I was at my cousins’ house playing. This man came to the door with a priest all dressed in black. They told my auntie that it was time for her children to come to school. My auntie began to cry and beg them not to take her children. The men began to get impatient and told all



The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, G-5475-FC-76

Junior girls' dormitory, Cecilia Jeffrey School, c.1950-1953

Session 1 • Activity Sheet 2 *continued*

the children to get their things and get into the back of a big truck. The men pulled one cousin roughly out of auntie's arms and carried her to the truck. My auntie was left there at the front door weeping. We didn't see them again for 10 months.

The next year, it was my turn to go to school. I was very afraid. I didn't know what to expect. The men came again and this time I had to go with them in the truck. We travelled for hours and finally at night got to the big school. They took my clothes and gave me a uniform. They cut off my hair which made me feel ashamed. I was taken to a room with 100 other girls with beds all in rows. We were sent to bed. I could hear some of the girls crying and I began to cry. No one came to talk to me or make me feel better. The next day we got up and dressed and went to have breakfast. I was really hungry by that time and remembered the breakfasts of bannock and dried fish at home. At the school though, we just had a bowl of mush which was lumpy and cold.

School was hard work. We didn't spend much time learning to read and write, but the girls had to do kitchen chores and the boys worked outside. We were hungry all the time. As I got older, I remember that I had to serve the teachers in their special dining room. They would eat bacon and eggs and toast in the morning, while we would have just soup or mush. It made me so mad.

I really missed my parents and cousins and aunts and uncles. I missed fishing with my dad and picking berries with my mother and grandmother. I didn't know how to speak English when I went to the school, only Carrier, but we weren't allowed to speak Carrier. If we were caught speaking our language, we were punished. We also couldn't talk to our brothers. The boys and girls were kept separately. When my little brother came to the school, I saw him across the yard. He looked so sad and was crying. I tried to run over to give him a hug and comfort him, but one of the teachers saw me and yanked me by my arm and swatted me. I wasn't allowed to go to him at all."

Tanis saw a tear in the corner of Atsoo's eye as she spoke. He was very quiet as she told him her stories. "What happened when you finished school and came back to the reserve? Did you speak Carrier and live with your family again?"

"I came back," Atsoo replied. "But everything was different. My parents had been so sad to have all their children taken away that they started to drink a lot and get drunk. They tried to forget how much it hurt them. There were a lot of fights in the community too. We hardly knew our families anymore and didn't know how to fit in. So we started to drink too and it was a really bad time. When your mother was about 10 years old, I realized that things had to change. I talked to a friend who told me about Jesus and how he could help me and heal all the hurt inside of me. That's when I started to walk with him and become a Jesus follower. I quit drinking and haven't done that for 24 years. I want you kids to have a better life, so that's why I work at the clinic helping the mothers learn about being good parents."

Tanis considered this. "I'm sorry that school was so hard for you Atsoo. But I'm glad you told me about it. I'm glad my school isn't like that. I want to become a writer for a newspaper. Maybe someday I can write about your school and more people will understand."

"That's a good idea," said Atsoo, giving Tanis a warm hug.

This is an extract of the story written by Shannon Bell-Wyminga in *We are One in the Spirit* (2010). Read the full version at www.presbyterian.ca/healing. Used with permission.



A Healing Journey

by Elder Audrey Bone, Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation, Manitoba

This is my journey. I am a woman of the Deer Clan from the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation. My Indian names are Morning Star Woman and Walking In The Clouds. The names are very precious to me and I am grateful to the Elders who gave them to me.

I remember the summers that I spent as a young child with my grandparents, who lived a traditional Anishinabe lifestyle. I remember how we would travel by horses to a place where we camped all summer to hunt, fish and gather medicines and berries. My grandmother left the greatest teaching that anyone could leave someone they loved very much. She taught me to believe that there is a God, Creator; that Creator listens to our prayers no matter where we are; and that Creator lives within us. We can pray any place, anywhere, any time because Creator is everywhere and Creator will hear us.

Living with my parents was a totally different experience from the time spent with my grandparents. Their own experiences changed my whole life. Both my parents were residential school survivors. They lost everything as a result of that experience, especially the most important things that children need to grow up: security and pride in who they are. Consequently I did not experience the safety, love, and security that I once had felt with my grandmother and grandfather.

I attended the same residential school as my father, which was run by The Presbyterian Church in Canada (at Birtle, Manitoba). My experience in the residential school was the same as that of my parents. The only difference was that I rebelled. I didn't believe all that was being put in my head. I felt helpless sometimes when I would see things happening that I knew were not right. I ran away once because I didn't like the feeling of being there; it felt like I was imprisoned and not allowed to feel freedom. All of this did something to me. I was also very sick during the time I was in that

residential school. I felt afraid and alone because it seemed that no one really cared about how sick I was. I was sent to Winnipeg to a specialist and there I had my thyroid gland removed. I never returned to that school.

Eventually I started working. My life wasn't very good for many years. When I began my journey to healing I didn't realize how much the residential school system had taken away from me. I didn't know the root of my pain. I couldn't even remember the good things from my childhood with my grandparents. That's how much anger, low self-esteem and low self-worth I felt.

At the age of 28, I decided to make some changes. It was going back to the traditional ways of my Anishinabe people that helped me to regain my strength and pick myself up off the ground. What I had to deal with always went back to the experiences that my mother and my father had lived through in residential school. Once I was able to get past that, I was able to start rebuilding my life, putting the pieces back together. I also knew that deep down inside of me there was a good human being.

From my own personal healing journey I want to say to all that if you have the courage to go within and find your true selves, it's a great feeling to know where you came from and where you are going. Follow your heart. The guidance you pray for will come from the Divine Spirit, our Creator. May you find peace within, and when you have you will know that you have succeeded. God bless all of your beautiful spirits.

This is an extract of the story which appears in *We are One in the Spirit* (2010). Read the full version at www.presbyterian.ca/healing. Used with permission.



Kumbaya – Carrier Language

Original Gullah* words = Come by here:

Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya
Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya
Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya
Oh Lord, Kumbaya

Carrier words = My Lord, come here, come here:

SuMoodihti 'an'ih, 'an'ih
SuMoodihti 'an'ih, 'an'ih
SuMoodihti 'an'ih, 'an'ih
O Moodihti, 'an'ih

Verses:

1. Someone's hurting, my Lord, 'an'ih...
2. Someone's crying, my Lord, 'an'ih...
3. Someone's praying, my Lord, 'an'ih...

*Gullah is a creole language spoken by the Gullah people, an African American population living on the the coastal region of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Words and Tune: Public Domain



Speaking the Truth about Residential Schools

As we heard last week in the story of Tanis and Atsoo, most of the children at residential schools were treated very, very badly.

Many of the children who attended these schools were told that they were stupid and worthless, and that what they felt and thought wasn't important. Many were beaten for acting up in class or made to clean the floor with a toothbrush. Many told of being forcibly taken from their homes. Usually upon arrival, children's braids were cut off and their hair was cut short – which today might be like a young girl having her head shaved. Treasured gifts from family members – necklaces, clothes – were taken away from the children when they arrived. Boys and girls, even siblings, were not allowed to speak to each other. They were not allowed to speak in the language of their parents and were usually punished for doing so.

The children were forced to live at the schools away from their parents, and couldn't tell their parents what was happening to them. If they tried to tell an adult when something bad happened, they were not believed or were told to keep quiet.

Because they were told that they were not important, many of the children felt somehow that they deserved to be treated badly. Many of them grew up ashamed of themselves. Many tried to forget the painful memories of their time at the residential schools.

Even as adults, most people did not want to talk about their experience. Remembering how they felt as children made them feel the hurt and sadness all over again.

But some of the people knew that it was important to speak up and tell the world about what happened. They knew that it was important, not just for themselves, but for all of the others who experienced the same things. They knew that what happened was wrong, and that keeping quiet when bad things happened was wrong also.

If they were going to believe in themselves again, if they were going to know that they did matter, they had to be brave. They had to face their own fears of remembering the painful experiences. They had to talk about things that happened to them that made them ashamed. They knew

that some people would not believe them and that they would have to repeat again and again that they were speaking the truth. They would have to tell the names of the people who hurt them. In some cases, they had to face these people whom they had become so afraid of as children.

In 1990, a man named Phil Fontaine was the Grand Chief of the Manitoba Chiefs. Because of his high position he knew that many people listened when he spoke. Chief Fontaine had gone to a residential school when he was a boy, and like so many other children, he was treated badly there. He had never spoken publicly about his experience, but he knew that it was important that the truth be known.

He was one of the very first people to speak out. He did interviews on television, on radio, and for newspapers. People found it hard to believe him, because they didn't want to believe that so many children had been hurt the way he had been hurt. But he kept talking and kept repeating that it was true. Soon other people came forward and began to tell their stories, and people began to know the truth.

Chief Fontaine went on to become the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. He later heard the apology of the Prime Minister of Canada for what happened at the residential schools. And he negotiated with the Government of Canada to arrange payments and programs to help the people who had been hurt at residential schools. He also accepted The Presbyterian Church in Canada's confession at the Forks in Winnipeg in October 1994. In 2012, he was given the highest medal of honour in Canada – the Order of Canada.

It took great courage for Chief Fontaine to be one of the first people to speak the truth about experiences that had been kept hidden because people were afraid and ashamed. And he inspired others to be courageous too – to speak the truth about their experiences, even when it was difficult, even when it hurt them to remember, even when it made them cry.

By acting courageously and speaking the truth, people were able to help themselves and each other heal. By speaking the truth, they became strong again.



The Truth Can Set You Free

A fable by Barbara Strang

The animals of the plains and forests lived well. They slept in their nests and burrows, or under the trees, or in the open under the stars. They respected the earth and the natural cycle of the seasons and they respected each other. The young animals were loved very deeply by their parents, who taught them all they needed to know in order to live good lives.

One day, animals from far away cities arrived in their midst. The city animals looked at the way the animals of the plains and forests lived and said to them, “Your way is too simple. We have machines and buildings and money in banks and we know how to live better than you. We are in charge of all of this land now. You must learn to live like us.”

And so they told the plains and forest animals that their young had to go away to school to learn to live like the city animals. And they took the young animals away.

Among the young animals were two friends, Bear and Turtle. Because Bear was a girl and Turtle was a boy, they were separated when they got to the school. They were told that they could no longer speak to each other because boys were only allowed to speak with boys and girls were only allowed to speak with girls.

Bear came from a loving family. Her mother was very gentle. They curled up together at night, and during the day they ambled slowly along through the forest, eating berries as they went. They ate fish too, fresh from the streams, and it was funny for Bear to watch her mother in a fast-moving stream, jumping around trying to catch fish in her paws. But she was a good fisher-bear and often caught their dinner.

While Bear knew her mother to be gentle, she also knew how strong and courageous she was. One awful day, a huge strange male bear charged at Bear from out of the forest. Bear’s mother became ferocious. Raising herself up on her hind legs to show her full size and strength she growled a terrible growl, then crashed down onto all four legs and attacked the strange bear. He slashed at her with his claws and clamped down on her neck with his sharp teeth. Mother bear was very badly hurt in the fighting and became weaker and weaker, but she didn’t give up. Groaning in pain, she kept fighting until the strange bear turned and ran away. Bear knew that her mother had been willing to risk being so badly hurt in order to protect what she loved. She knew that this took courage.



Session 2 • Activity Sheet 2 *continued*

At school, Bear and Turtle were not treated well. Bear, in particular, was treated very, very badly. She was told that she was stupid, and she came to believe it. She was at the school for many years and spent more time working in the kitchen or laundry room than getting an education. She cried herself to sleep every night. And she grew afraid of the animals there. She learned not to look at anyone, and not to speak unless she was asked a question.

When it was time for her to graduate from the school, she returned home to the forest but things were not as they were before. She was afraid of everything and everyone. Her mother had been so sad when Bear was taken away that she had stopped foraging for berries and fishing in the stream.

Bear hadn't learned how to forage for food or to fish when she was at school. And she didn't know much else about how to survive in the forest. She had come to think that she was useless and that she deserved the bad things that happened to her.

Turtle had also been treated badly at school. But when Turtle returned to the forest he was reunited with his grandmother, who was very wise. When they were together again, his grandmother asked him about his experience at school.

Turtle was ashamed. He did not want to say what happened to him. He didn't want to talk about the names that people had called him, or of the things they made him do. He looked down at the ground and said, "It was all right."

But Grandmother Turtle could see that it was not all right, and she said to him, "We animals of the forest know what it means to be free. If we are afraid, then we cannot be free. It takes courage to face our fears. It takes courage to tell the truth. But when we are courageous, when we face our fears and when we tell the truth, then we will always be free. So let me ask you again, my grandson, to tell me about your experience at school."

And so Turtle told his grandmother everything. He cried as he spoke, and she cried too to hear how he had suffered. And when he was done, Grandmother Turtle told him that he was very brave. She told him that she loved him.

Then she told him that it was now time for him to learn how to be a turtle again. And she led him away to show him which plants were good to eat.

The next day, Turtle sought out Bear in the forest. Bear was curled up in a ball. Her stomach was growling



because she was hungry. Turtle crawled up on a rock beside her. He sat there for a long while and thought about the words of his grandmother.

Slowly he turned to Bear and said, "Bear, tell me about your experience at school."

Tears began to fall from Bear's eyes and she said, "I can't, Turtle. And what does it matter anyway? Who cares?"

Turtle answered, "I care, Bear. I know that you are from a family of courageous and strong animals. I saw your mother defend you from that terrible strange bear so many years ago. I know that you have the strength of all bears in your blood. I know that you can dance in the streams and catch fish like your mother did. But you have to dig down deep inside your soul, you have to be brave, and you have to tell the truth of your experience at school. Then you will be free. Then you can learn to be a bear again.

Bear was silent. She closed her eyes and pictured her mother fighting to protect her. She pictured herself walking at her mother's side as she learned which berries were safe to eat and which were poisonous. And she pictured herself rolling on the ground laughing as she watched her mother jump and dance in the stream, catching fish.

And then she began to tell her story about her experience at the school.

She and Turtle cried together.

Then she raised herself up on her hind legs to show her full size and strength. She growled a wonderful growl. Then she crashed down on all four legs and ran off to ask her mother to teach her how to fish.



Card 1

We now tell the truth.
The Government of Canada and
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
tried to get Aboriginal peoples
to stop believing their
traditional teachings.

Card 2

We now tell the truth.
The Presbyterian Church in Canada felt
it had the right to decide what was right
for Aboriginal peoples because it
thought that the ways of its European
ancestors were better than Aboriginal
ways.

Card 3

We now tell the truth.
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
encouraged the Government to
not allow some important spiritual
practices which had always helped
Aboriginal peoples connect with God.

Card 4

We now tell the truth.
Some teachers were good teachers.
But this could still not make up for the
hurt caused by separating children and
parents and breaking up families and
communities. Some people spoke up
about the harmful things that were being
done to Aboriginal peoples, but they were
told to be quiet and not tell the truth.

Card 5

We now tell the truth.
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
said that Aboriginal peoples
could know God and could live well
only if they could be like us,
think like us, talk like us,
worship like us, sing like us,
and work like us.

Card 6

We now tell the truth.
The Church was not acting
as Jesus taught us to –
with respect and love
for all people.

Card 7

We now tell the truth.
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
took children from their homes
to put them in residential schools.

Card 8

We now tell the truth.
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
punished children in ways that
were not fair, and that were
sometimes very hurtful.

Card 9

We now tell the truth.
Some children were badly hurt
at schools run by
The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Card 10

We now tell the truth.
As a result of The Church's actions,
many Aboriginal people forgot
their language and lost things
about their culture that were
valuable and important to their
parents and grandparents.

Card 11

We ask for forgiveness
from Aboriginal peoples.
With God's guidance we will
seek ways to say we are sorry
and show we really mean it.

These confession cards are based on The Confession of
The Presbyterian Church in Canada to Aboriginal peoples,
adopted by the 120th General Assembly June 9, 1994.



This Little Light of Mine

Chorus:

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine,
Let it shine,
Let it shine.

Hide it under a bush? Oh no!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bush? Oh no!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bush? Oh no!
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine,
Let it shine,
Let it shine.

(Chorus)

Don't let anyone blow it out,
I'm gonna let it shine
Don't let anyone blow it out,
I'm gonna let it shine
Don't let anyone blow it out,
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine,
Let it shine,
Let it shine.

(Chorus)

Shine all over [name of town]
I'm gonna let it shine
Shine all over [name of town]
I'm gonna let it shine
Shine all over [name of town]
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine,
Let it shine,
Let it shine.

(Chorus)

Words and Tune: Public Domain



The Apology Play

- Tell the children that they are going to act out a play about apologizing.
- Clear a place in the room to act as the stage area.
- Tell them that you need five volunteers to be given character names. Assign the five names to the five children: Dakota, Jordan, Jesse, Taylor and Teacher. *Note:* Boys or girls can play any of these parts. Use the appropriate pronoun in the script, depending on who is assigned each part.
- Explain that you are going to read aloud a story and that they need to act out the story as you describe it. For example, if you say “Dakota and Jordan were sitting in the school playground playing cards”, then the two children playing these parts should pretend to play cards.
- Give Dakota and Jordan the cut out playing cards (Session 3, Activity Sheet 4). Ask them to sit on the floor off to one side of the ‘stage’ and divide the cards between themselves, ready to pretend to play cards.
- Ask the other children, including Taylor and Jesse, to stand off to the other side of ‘centre-stage’.
- Ask the Teacher to stand off on his/her own.
- Read the script as follows, and encourage the children to act out the story. Make sure you give them enough time to do so.

Session 3 • Activity Sheet 1 *continued*

Script:

One sunny day, the children of Mill Street School were out in the playground for recess. Dakota and Jordan, two best friends, were sitting on the ground playing cards. They loved playing card games. It was a good way to put their brains to work, which they really liked doing. They were smart kids.

On the other side of the playground, the rest of the students were just hanging around and playing various games – some were playing clapping games, some were playing tag. These kids were pretty loud and active. Most of them were nice, but a couple of them had bad attitudes.

One of these kids was Jesse. Jesse liked to make other kids do what she/he wanted. She/he liked being powerful, or at least liked thinking that she/he was powerful. Sometimes she'd/he'd make the other kids in her/his group line up behind her/him and follow her/him around the playground, just so that she/he could be the boss.

On that sunny day, as she/he was leading the other kids around, Jesse noticed Dakota and Jordan playing cards. She/he didn't like the fact that they didn't pay attention to her/him. So she/he led all the kids over to where they were playing. When Dakota and Jordan looked up, Jesse gave them a mean look. Then she/he bent down and grabbed the cards away from them. Jesse ripped the cards in half and threw them on the ground, saying, "That's a stupid game for stupid brainiacs like you." And she/he marched off, indicating for all the other kids to follow her/him. Dakota and Jordan just sat there. They were clearly sad, but were too afraid of Jesse and all of the other kids to do anything.

But one of the teachers saw what had happened. She/he marched over to Jesse and the group of kids who had followed her/him and shook her/his finger at them. She/he pointed over to Dakota and Jordan and said "Go apologize to Dakota and Jordan." She/he crossed her/his arms and watched as Jesse and the other kids frowned and walked back to Dakota and Jordan.

Jesse grumbled the word "Sorry", then walked away to the other side of the playground. Each of the other kids said sorry too and walked back to join Jesse. Once they had gathered together again, Jesse said, "Let's just ignore them from now on. Who cares about them, anyway?" And then the kids just hung around for the rest of recess.

The teacher went back into the school.

Dakota and Jordan gathered up the ripped cards and tried to put them back together to play their game again.

But Taylor, one of the kids in Jesse's group, was feeling really badly about the way they had treated Dakota and Jordan. Taylor also felt really badly about his/her own apology, because he/she hadn't said it like he'd/she'd meant it.

Taylor realized that there was no reason to be so mean to Dakota and Jordan. They were nice kids. Just because they didn't hang out with Jesse's group, just because they were a little different, shouldn't matter. And anyway, Jesse was really mean and bossy. And Taylor liked playing cards. He/she especially liked learning new games.

So Taylor left Jesse's group and walked over to Dakota and Jordan. Taylor looked at them and said "I really *am* sorry, and I mean it this time. I'd like to make it up to you. I have a deck of cards at home that I can bring tomorrow. You can have it. And if you'd be willing to teach me, I'd love to learn that game you were playing."

Dakota and Jordan smiled at Taylor and asked him/her to sit down with them.

The End.



Apology of the Government of Canada

On June 11, 2008, in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister of Canada made a public apology to Aboriginal peoples for the experience of the residential schools. While the following are not his exact words, here's the message that he delivered on that day:

On behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

We apologize for taking children from their homes to make them live at residential schools.

We apologize for not allowing children to learn the teachings of their culture from their parents.

We apologize for not letting parents raise their own children, and for the fact that their children grew up without having learned from their parents how to be good mothers and fathers.

We apologize for not protecting you from the bad things that happened at the residential schools.

You have been carrying the pain of your experiences alone for a long time – but it is our responsibility to help carry that pain and to help heal it.

The attitudes that people had toward you in the residential schools are not okay in our country.

You have been trying to get over your bad experiences for a long time. This is not just your problem, it's our problem. It's time we started being better friends to you because we want everyone in our country to be treated well.

The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks Aboriginal people to forgive us for hurting you.

We are sorry.

(The full text of the apology is available at www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649)



The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Native Ministries

Print pictures of each of these native ministries from www.presbyterian.ca/resources-mission. Show the children the pictures and, in your own words, based on the descriptions below, describe what the various ministries are doing.

Hummingbird Ministries

Vancouver, British Columbia

Hummingbird Ministries promotes healing between First Nations and church communities. It encourages the spiritual healing of all people, including those alienated from the church. Using a variety of arts – dancing, singing, drumming, fabric – it helps Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists establish relationships and build peace and reconciliation.

Cariboo Presbyterian Church – Ndazkoh and Area Dakelh Outreach

Cariboo Region, British Columbia

Cariboo Presbyterian Church reaches out with the love of Christ to people in rural and remote areas with house church fellowships and Bible studies. Its Ndazkoh and Area Dakelh ministry reaches out to the Southern Carrier and other First Nations peoples in northern British Columbia.

Edmonton Urban Native Ministry

Edmonton, Alberta

Edmonton Urban Native Ministry serves mainly Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton's inner city. A weekly drop-in centre provides hot meals daily. Computer lessons, a fax and print service, emergency food bank, clothing bank and bus ticket service are also offered. A daily devotion time allows people to talk about current and relevant issues, and provides a safe place for sharing stories, prayer and worship. People are encouraged to share their native languages and to discuss community connections that many have lost. A Sunday worship service invites people to experience spiritual healing.

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry provides food and friendship to the homeless, offers healing circles and a Sunday worship service in downtown Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It specifically serves Aboriginal people, but offers its services to anyone in need.

Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church

Mistawasis, Saskatchewan

Mistawasis Presbyterian Church is the only Presbyterian Church on a First Nations community in Canada. Located 100 km west of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, on Mistawasis First Nation in West Central Saskatchewan, this century-old church was established at the invitation of Chief Mistawasis over 140 years ago.

Winnipeg Inner City Missions

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Winnipeg Inner City Missions offers a children's program, thrift store, community drop-in centre, transitional housing, employment training and worship services. It works to develop each individual's physical, emotional, spiritual and social well-being. It serves aboriginal people and other people in need.

Anamiewigummig (Kenora Fellowship Centre)

Kenora, Ontario

Anamiewigummig offers a place of refuge, sanctuary and hospitality to some of the most vulnerable people in Kenora, Ontario, many of whom are Aboriginal. The centre's daytime drop-in, overnight shelter and a soup kitchen provide services which show love and care to people who are struggling.



Playing Cards for Dakota and Jordan

1	8	6
1	8	6
1	8	6
5	2	7
5	2	7



Making and Breaking Treaties

Adapted from In Peace & Friendship – A New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples Blanket Exercise ©KAIROS 2011 – Used with permission

Long before the arrival of Europeans in what we now call Canada, Aboriginal peoples lived here. It was known as Turtle Island. Millions of people lived in thousands of communities that were part of hundreds of nations. These blankets represent that land and you represent the Aboriginal peoples. ***(Lay blankets down, ask the children to stand on them.)***

The people looked after themselves by fishing, hunting, and farming. Each society had its own language, culture, traditions, laws and governments. Before the newcomers arrived, the Aboriginal peoples who lived here ended arguments by making peaceful agreements that they called “treaties”.

But about 500 years ago people from Europe wanted to set out across the oceans to find new land and new riches. When the Europeans first arrived here, there were many more Aboriginal peoples than Europeans. The Europeans depended on the Aboriginal peoples to teach them how to survive. They talked about living together on the land and they made treaties. ***(Ask the children if they remember what treaties are.)***

Because the Aboriginal peoples were here first, these treaties explained how they were going to share the land and the water and the animals and the plants with the Europeans. ***(Ask the children if they know what the word “Aboriginal” means. Explain that it means “original”, “native”, “first”.)***

For the Aboriginal peoples, the treaties were very special and sacred agreements. They were statements of peace, friendship, and sharing, and they were based on the ideas of respect and honesty.

Sharing was very important to Aboriginal peoples. In their communities, the hunters shared their food with everyone. Families helped other families raise all the children in the community. In the treaties, Aboriginal peoples tried to help the Europeans understand what they meant by sharing.

But the Europeans had a different view of the treaties. For them, land was something that could be bought and sold, and treaties were a way of getting Aboriginal peoples to give up their land. ***(Have the children fold the blankets in half.)***

After a while, there were more Europeans than Aboriginal peoples. One reason for this is that many Aboriginal people died from the diseases the Europeans brought.

As more Europeans arrived, they needed more land. The Europeans started ignoring or changing their laws to make it easier to take land away from Aboriginal peoples. Many Aboriginal peoples had their land taken away. ***(Take away half of the blankets. The children should now be crowded on a few blankets.)***

Session 4 • Activity Sheet 1 *continued*

Aboriginal peoples lost more than just their land. Because the land was so important to them, when it was taken away some of them also lost the ability to practise their traditional ways of looking after themselves, of feeding themselves. ***(Ask the children if they remember what these traditional ways were, as you told them at the beginning – hunting, fishing and farming.)***

The Europeans thought they were more important than Aboriginal peoples. They began to see Aboriginal peoples not as friends and partners, but as a ‘problem’ that had to be solved because they wanted the land the Aboriginal peoples had. They changed laws so that control of Aboriginal land was given to the Government of Canada. And they changed laws to say that Aboriginal peoples were to be taken care of by the government, that they needed to give up their own ways of living and learn to live like the Europeans. The laws said that the government would set up areas of land to be called “reserves”, and that Aboriginal peoples needed to live on that land. ***(Set one blanket in the center of the circle and tell ½ the children to sit there. The children in the center are now on reserves.)***

These laws turned strong, independent nations of Aboriginal peoples into poor communities that depended on the government for almost everything. Aboriginal peoples were not allowed to leave the reserves unless they had special permission to do so. They were not allowed to vote in elections. They were not allowed to practice their own spirituality. They were not allowed to have their own traditional governments. If they did not behave according to all of these rules, they could be put in jail. The idea was to make Aboriginal peoples become more like the Europeans. They had to give up their rights and become like Canadians whose families had come from Europe.

As part of this plan, Aboriginal children were sent to live in schools far away from their communities. These schools were called residential schools – because “residence” means the place where you live. ***(Move all the children off the blankets to one corner of the room. Stand with them and continue to read. This represents the displacement of residential school students.)***

In these schools the children were not allowed to speak their own language. Girls and boys were not allowed to speak to each other – even if they were sister and brother. They were not fed very well. And many of them were even physically hurt by the adults at the schools.

The government had arrangements with different churches in Canada to operate the schools. These included the Roman Catholic Church, The United Church, The Anglican Church and one more... ***(ask them to name it)*** That’s right, The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

(Bring the children back to sit on the blankets.) The experience of residential schools made Aboriginal people lose even more of their understanding about how to live healthy lives and have strong, healthy communities. As a result, many Aboriginal communities are very poor, often without safe homes for people to live in or safe water to drink.

Throughout history, Aboriginal peoples have been standing up for their rights. They have spoken out to say that things have not been fair. But they have not always been listened to. They have shown how treaties were broken and how much hurt was caused by the schools.

Today, we are starting to understand how treaties were broken. We understand how Aboriginal peoples have lost their land and their traditional, healthy way of living. We understand that the treaties are still important today and that we need to work to share all of the good that there is in our country, because that was part of the first agreements made with Aboriginal peoples long ago.

It is what Jesus has taught us to do. And it is the right thing to do.



Bannock

Since hot lard is highly flammable, caution is advised. Be sure to have an adult fry the bannock.

To make this traditional First Nations bread (for 6-8 people), you will need:

- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup water plus a few tablespoons
- 1 cup lard for cooking
- Optional ingredients: 1 egg; 1-2 tbsp. sugar (for flavour and texture)

Instructions

- Preheat a large, deep frying pan to 350° or medium high.
- Melt lard in the pan so that it is about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch high in the pan.
- Mix together the flour, baking powder, salt and sugar (if using) in a large bowl.
- If using eggs, mix them into $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water and slowly mix this into the flour mixture.
- Continue to slowly add more water until all the flour is mixed in and the dough is soft. (It should *not* be the texture of bread dough. It will be softer and stickier.)
- The best technique for mixing is to use your hands, not a spoon.
- Lift the dough from the sides to the centre to mix in the remaining flour until you reach a good consistency, and knead it a few times.
- Take small chunks of dough and form them into flat rounds about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick and about 4 inches in diameter.
- Place the rounds in the hot lard in the frying pan and cook until golden on the bottom.
- Flip and cook on the other side.
- Serve with butter and a berry jam. (Wild blueberry is the best!)

This Bannock recipe is from *Katelyn's Cariboo Adventure: Meeting Partners in Cariboo Presbyterian Church* written by Shannon Bell-Wyominga. Used with permission.



Lahal

A traditional Carrier game

You will need:

- 2 sets of 5 sticks – e.g., chopsticks
- 1 set of 4 “bones” – short sticks or dowelling that can be hidden in a fist
- 2 rubber bands or black tape
- A drum

How to play:

- Wind the rubber bands or black tape around two of the “bones” – keeping the two bones separate from each other. These will be called the “striped” bones.
- Divide into two teams.
- Have the teams sit or stand in a row, facing each another.
- Give each team a set of five sticks.
- Give one team the four bones.
- The team with the four bones chooses two of its players and gives them each a plain bone and a striped bone.
- The two players with the bones hold one bone in each hand, then put their hands behind their backs and spend some time mixing up the bones behind their backs.
- Players on the other team watch carefully to try to figure out where the striped bones are.
- At the same time, the team with the bones is singing and drumming in order to distract the guessing team.
- When ready, the two players with the bones hold their arms straight out in front of them with their fists closed, holding the bones so they cannot be seen. It’s time for the other team to try to guess where the striped bones are!
- One player is designated as guesser on the other team. He or she guesses in which hand each of the two players are holding the *striped* bones – left or right hand.
- If the guesser guesses *both* correctly, their team wins the bones and it is their turn to hide them.
- If the guesser guesses both incorrectly, they have to give one of their sticks to the other team and then it all starts over.
- If the guesser guesses one set of bones correctly, they win that set of bones, and the play is repeated with just one set. If they guess that set incorrectly, they give up another stick and it keeps going until they have run out of sticks or they win the second set of bones.
- When the guessing team has won both sets of bones, they then take the turn of holding the bones and the other team guesses.
- The game is over when one team has won all the sticks, or you run out of time!

The instructions for the game Lahal are from *Katelyn’s Cariboo Adventure: Meeting Partners in Cariboo Presbyterian Church* written by Shannon Bell-Wyominga. Used with permission.



There is Hope

By Barbara Strang

Nathan and Nathalie had been going to school together for years. They were best friends. They knew that it wasn't typical for a boy and a girl to be best friends, but they didn't care. The fact is that they were so much alike, and they had so much fun together.

They both lived just outside of a small town. They both loved nature. And there was plenty of it around to be explored. There was the river, with the waterfalls a few kilometres upstream. There were plenty of forests and plenty of open fields too. There were turtles and snakes, and foxes and beavers, and birds everywhere, and so many bugs that it would take a lifetime to count them. Both Nathalie and Nathan especially loved turtles!

They both liked drawing and painting too. They each had paints and brushes and easels, and they loved to take these into a field and choose something to paint. Sometimes they gave their paintings to each other. Sometimes they took them home where they were posted on the fridge until the next one was done. Sometimes they painted on rocks or sticks and gave these as gifts to people they knew.

They were alike in many ways. But they were different too.

Nathalie's parents had moved to their community from a big city in the south. Nathalie and her family attended the Presbyterian Church in town. She went



to Sunday school, and her parents sang in the choir.

Nathan lived on the reserve just outside of town. He was part of the Ojibway Nation of people. His parents and grandparents and even their grandparents had always lived on the land they still live on. They had very special sacred traditional practices and gatherings that kept them very connected to the Creator.

Nathan and Nathalie were very good friends but one day, it looked like things might change between them.

Nathan had gone to visit his grandparents at their house early one morning, as he often did. They were in the living room watching the news on TV and there was a story about something called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was about a group of meetings that were being set up across the country so that people who had gone to residential schools as children could talk about what happened to them there.

After the news story was done, he turned around and saw that his grandmother looked upset. She said, “I should go to one of those meetings and tell those people how much it hurt to be sent to the residential school. They cut off my beautiful braids. I felt like I wasn’t even an Ojibway girl anymore,” she said. “And they took away the necklace of beads that my mother had given me so that she could be close to my heart, even though we were apart. They made me throw them in the garbage.”

Nathan felt angry. He shouted, “I hate that school! I hate what they did to you! Who gave them the right? I hate them.” And he ran out of the door and ran and ran all the way to Nathalie’s house.

He banged on the screen door and didn’t stop until Nathalie came to the door. She was surprised to see Nathan there. She was also surprised to see the anger on his face. Nathan looked at her and shouted, “I hate what your people did to my grandmother at that stupid school! I hate it! I hate it!”, and he turned and ran away home.

Nathalie began to cry. At her Sunday school class she had learned about the residential schools. Her Sunday school teacher told them that their church was going to start a journey of healing and reconciliation. Each week they would learn more about the schools and what the members of the church could do to say they were sorry to Aboriginal people and show that they mean it.

Nathalie had been so upset that she couldn’t even talk to Nathan about it. In fact, she had felt ashamed. She felt like her heart was broken.

That afternoon Nathan’s family was attending a sharing circle at the community centre. At a sharing circle a special object is passed around and people share their thoughts. On that afternoon, the elder leading the circle took out a small rock with a painting of a turtle on it. She told them that it had been painted by a young girl who went to the Presbyterian Church in town. She told them that the girl loved turtles, and nature in general. Nathan knew the turtle represents ‘truth’, so it was a good symbol for them to hold on to when they were speaking.

As the rock passed from person to person, and people began to speak, Nathan slowly began to feel less angry. When the rock was passed to him, he spoke about his Grandmother’s story and how upset he had felt. Having others listen to him, and being able to listen to others, was helping to take the pain away.

The Elder said a prayer, and Nathan felt the spirit of the Creator wash over him. Nathan now wanted to speak to Nathalie and tell her how he felt. He also wanted to talk about what they might do to help his grandmother so that she wouldn’t have to carry so much sadness. He felt that the Creator would help him find the words to share his feelings.

As he was thinking he could hear a great thunderstorm passing by. It became very dark and there was lightening.

Not too far away, Nathalie was lying on her bed looking out at the storm. She was sad that Nathan was upset. And it seemed to her that the sky was angry, just like Nathan.

Eventually, the storm passed. As the sky got lighter, Nathalie saw a beautiful rainbow and she was reminded of the story of Noah’s Ark from the bible. Noah had listened to God and trusted him. He had done as God instructed, even though the instructions sounded crazy! He had built an ark and filled it with two of every kind of animal. Then he sailed through the terrible storm for 40 days and 40 nights. After the storm ended, and the water dried up, God painted a beautiful rainbow in the sky as a promise to Noah that things would be all right. She remembered Noah’s trust in God.

She smiled. She was beginning to feel better. She decided to go see Nathan the very next day to see if they could talk. She knew that God would help her to find the right words to say. She closed her eyes and said, “Thank you, God”.



I've Got the Joy, Down in my Heart

1. I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart,
Where?
Down in my heart!
Where?
Down in my heart!
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart,
Where?
Down in my heart to stay.

Chorus:

And I'm so happy,
So very happy,
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart,
And I'm so happy,
So very happy,
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

2. I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart,
Where?
Down in my heart!
Where?
Down in my heart!
I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart,
Where?
Down in my heart to stay.

(Chorus)

3. I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart!
Where?
Down in my heart!
Where?
Down in my heart!
I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart!
Where?
Down in my heart to stay.

(Chorus)

Words and Tune: Public Domain



The Presbyterian Church in Canada's
Mission Study for Children and Youth
www.presbyterian.ca