



Indigenous Education Department



ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Introduction and Context

Where it started:

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) Residential School (1891-1981) Commemoration Project and Reunion events that took place in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in May 2013. This project brought together former students and their families from the Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, Southern Dakelh and St'at'imc Nations along with the Cariboo Regional District, the Mayors and municipalities, School Districts and civic organizations in the Cariboo Region.

The events were designed to commemorate the residential school experience, to witness and honour the healing journey of the survivors and their families, and to commit to the ongoing process of reconciliation.

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of this project. As spokesperson for the Reunion group leading up to the events, former student Phyllis (Jack) Webstad told her story of her first day at residential school when her shiny new orange shirt, bought by her grandmother, was taken from her as a six-year old girl

The annual Orange Shirt Day on September 30th opens the door to global conversation on all aspects of Residential Schools. It is an opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of Residential Schools and the legacy they have left behind. A discussion all Canadians can tune into and create bridges with each other for reconciliation. A day for survivors to be reaffirmed that they matter, and so do those that have been affected. Every Child Matters, even if they are an adult, from now on. (information taken from orangeshirtday.org)

<https://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html>

Why September 30?

The date was chosen because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools, and because it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year. It is an opportunity for

First Nations, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come.

September 30th Orange Shirt Day: A Commitment to Learning:

While this date makes sense for the story, we acknowledge that this date is a busy time in public education. The start-up of school, and the data collection at the end of September, could compete with a school's ability to provide background knowledge about the origins of this day, and lay a foundation for coordinating school events. For this reason, we would like to highlight the statement from the Orange Shirt Day Society that asks that schools use this event as "an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year".

The Indigenous Education Department invites use of our district website to explore the larger picture of the history and legacy of the Residential School System. In particular, the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report provides guidance and clarity regarding the specific actions needed to redress the legacy of residential schools and to advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. We welcome inquiries regarding your ideas, and ask that you please connect with us before inviting guest speakers into your classrooms due to the sensitive nature of this topic.

Truth and Reconciliation and Trauma-Informed Practice

Achieving reconciliation is like climbing a mountain — we must proceed a step at a time. It will not always be easy. There will be storms, there will be obstacles, but we cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by the task because our goal is Just and and it is also necessary. We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing.

Justice Murray Sinclair (from his remarks on the Truth and Reconciliation Report).

The stories of residential school are essentially stories of trauma. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was enacted because the government of Canada perpetuated wrongdoing against its own citizens. The story is known around the globe, just as stories of Apartheid in South Africa are known around the world. The truth has been shared, and we are now in a period of reconciliation where Canadians are at various stages of their learning regarding this part of our shared history. The background knowledge that educators will need to confidently share this information with their students requires both curiosity and commitment. The Indigenous Education Department is here to walk with you on this personal and professional journey. Please

connect with us as together we seek to provide a culturally and emotionally safe learning experience for all learners.

TRC and Orange Shirt Day Resources

- Truth and Reconciliation Reports: <http://www.trc.ca/> (Click on TRC Reports and Findings)
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action: http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- Orange Shirt Day Society <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html>
- Residential School Resources <https://aned.sd61.bc.ca/teacher-resources/residential-schools/>
- Orange Shirt Day Resources <https://aned.sd61.bc.ca/teacher-resources/orange-shirt-day/>
- Authentic First Peoples Resource Guide K-9 (FNESC) <https://resources.fnesc.ca/>
- British Columbia Teacher's Federation <https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/AboriginalEducation/OrangeShirtDayActivities.pdf>
- Orange Shirt Day On-Line Event *_ A Virtual Event Open to All Canadian Schools For Youth Grades 5 - 12 to Honour Residential School Survivors, their families and communities:*
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/every-child-matters-chaque-enfant-compte-tickets-107741056400?fbclid=IwAR2KOGMz3hFO6DIMjxtBx2xU7yHNfeXILowobxVFg9Y3YxwQbMbToz2pzSg>