

Part Four

Action for Reconciliation

Summary

Part Four focusses on the social responsibility all Canadians have to help with the healing process. First is a look at the meaning of reconciliation in terms of both Indian Residential School survivors and the broader issue of the relationship between First Nations and other Canadians. Next students examine why it matters that all Canadians become actively involved in the reconciliation process. Students are asked to write a personal statement about why it matters to them. Finally, after researching various actions that people in BC and across Canada have, or will be, participating in, the students design an activity that involves them taking action for reconciliation.

Enduring Understanding

All Canadians can help the healing process by learning about and understanding the truths about the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools.

Essential Questions

Big Question

What are the most effective ways that Canadians can bring about reconciliation with First Nations people for the legacy of Indian Residential Schools?

Focus Questions

1. What responsibility do all Canadians have to remember, reconcile, and respond to the injustice that was the Residential School system?
2. What positive actions can be taken to bring about reconciliation?

Lesson 4.1**What is Reconciliation?****Key Concepts**

- Reconciliation requires changes in relationships between groups
- Canadians have been denied an accurate understanding of First Nations peoples, and of the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies
- It will take time for healing of the relationship between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal peoples to occur

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Define *reconciliation* in terms of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies
- Identify signs and goals of the reconciliation process
- Explain how Canadians have been denied a proper education about First Nations societies and their historical relationships with Canadians

Resources

- *They Came for the Children* p. 86-87
- Online video: Murray Sinclair discussing What is Reconciliation (2m. 55s.) <https://vimeo.com/25389165> or <http://www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=312>
- *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (Executive Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission). Download at www.trc.ca – go to TRC Findings. On the next page, click on Executive Summary.
- *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*. Download at www.trc.ca – go to TRC Findings. On the next page, click on Principles.

Suggested Activities**1. Definitions**

Discuss the meaning of *reconcile* and *reconciliation*.

- There are several meanings for *reconcile*, but the important one here is the reestablishment of relationships.

2. What is Reconciliation?

View the video “What is Reconciliation?”

- Review or explain who Justice Murray Sinclair is. (*Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.)
- Discuss what students think the main idea of the video is. (*One main idea is that it took a long time – seven generations – to create the damage of today, and it will take several generations to truly heal.*)
- For a further discussion of reconciliation, see documents coming out of the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report: *Honouring Truth, Reconciliation for the Future*, pages 6-8; Principles of Reconciliation, in *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*, pages 3-4.

3. Broken Relationships

Discuss ways that the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada has been broken.

- Ask students to examine the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Conclusion 6, on page 86 of *They Came for the Children* and the second of the concluding points (pages 86-87.)
- What signs does the report suggest will indicate effective reconciliation has been achieved? (*Regained self-respect for Aboriginal people; relations of mutual respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; change in relationships with governments.*)

4. More than Indian Residential Schools

Point out to students that the reconciliation called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is not just about Indian Residential Schools. It is about the whole relationship that has been fractured by colonialism and racism.

- Refer back to the TRC Interim Report Conclusions, number 6. Use the discussion of this conclusion as a starting point.
- Ask students to write a written response to the question: How have Canadians been denied an understanding of the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people?

Lesson 4.2**Why Does it Matter?*****Key Concepts***

- Reconciliation will require genuine commitment from all Canadians

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Categorize various responses to the question: Why does reconciliation matter?
- Express in their own words why working towards reconciliation matters

Resources

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission, It Matters to Me website:
<http://www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=328>
- 100 Years of Loss Booklet:
(download at <http://www.legacyofhope.ca/downloads/100-years-of-loss-booklet.pdf>)

Suggested Activities**1. Reconsidering Importance**

Ask students to review their responses to the question from Part One, Why is it important to learn about Indian Residential Schools? Would they add anything to their responses?

2. Why it Matters

Have students read the section “Why it Matters” in the “100 Years of Loss” booklet. Discuss each statement to make sure students understand its intent.

3. Personal Statement

Ask students to write a personal statement telling why it matters to them.

- Students may want to see what people have written on the Truth and Reconciliation website page, “It Matters to Me” (<http://www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=328>)
- After discussing it in class, some students may want to post their statement to the website, if it is appropriate.

Lesson 4.3**Taking Action*****Key Concepts***

- Individuals and groups across Canada are coming together to take action for reconciliation.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Give examples of ways in which people are taking action to reconcile injustices
- Evaluate ways in which their understanding and attitudes about Indian Residential Schools has changed during this unit
- Design ways to help other Canadians fully understand about Indian Residential Schools and their ongoing impact

Resources

- Websites with ideas and examples for taking action, such as:
 - Project of Heart <http://www.projectofheart.ca/>
 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission <http://www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=328>
 - Reconciliation Canada <http://reconciliationcanada.ca/>
 - UBC Indian Residential School Initiative <http://irsi.aboriginal.ubc.ca/>

Suggested Activities**1. Action for Reconciliation**

Have students research what individuals, students, and other groups have done, or are planning to do to take action for reconciliation. Is anything happening in the local community?

- Make a class list of different activities. How does each activity hope to help with reconciliation?
- Discuss with students some types of activities they could be involved in.

2. Action Project

Ask students to plan an activity which can help educate others about the truth about Indian Residential Schools, and encourage others to understand what Reconciliation means.

- Decide on how the project will be carried out. Will it be a whole class project, such as a tile project? Will it be decided and carried out in small groups? Will it be an individual activity?
- As a class or group establish the goals for the project. Who will the audience be? How will you measure success?

Part Four Assessment

1. Final Report on Action Activity

Have students submit a final report on their Action Activity. The form it takes will depend on the type of activity they undertook. It could be a written or oral report, a digital production, a video or a final piece of artwork.

Suggested criteria for assessment:

- The report provides a context for the activity based on learnings about the history and truth of the Indian Residential School System.
- The report summarizes what took place in the activity.
- The report evaluates the results of the activity.