



INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES: JOY, BEAUTY AND BRILLIANCE

Catholic Virtual Learning Resource



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PRAYER FOR TOLERANCE, FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION

National Indigenous Peoples Day: June 21, 2021

O God, Creator and Father of all,
with humility we your children acknowledge the relationship of all living things.
For this we thank you, we praise you and we worship you.

We call on you, Great Mystery, the Word made Flesh
– our teacher, prophet and brother –
to open our hearts to all our brothers and sisters,
and with them to grow in the wisdom, honesty, courage and
respectfulness shown in The Sacred Teachings.

Give us the vision and honesty to recognize
that the we are all brothers and sisters of one human family,
created and sustained by the One Creator.
As we deal with many challenges, may we never give way to fear and anger,
which can be the source of division and threat amongst peoples.

We look to how God always gives to us,
as a remedy for sins of prejudice and intolerance.
We see in God the Creator of all things,
One who always provides and is generous
– even given the abuses we have heaped on one another and on the earth.

We see in the Son, Jesus Christ
– the innocent Victim who pours His life blood out from the Cross for all peoples.

We see how the Holy Spirit is God's gift,
alive in our world today
– inspiring vision and hope that we can have
the same mind and heart of God!

May Your Spirit bless the souls
who died at the Kamloops residential school
and all souls who died at residential schools.

May this same Spirit also bring blessing and healing
to all families and communities affected in any way by the schools.

O Creator, show us the way to healing,
forgiveness and reconciliation
and a renewed fellowship.

Amen.



“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”

— St. Catherine of Sienna

A SHARED WORLDVIEW

As teachers in Catholic schools, we share a unique worldview grounded in service and community. Through our professional practice, guiding students with our hearts and minds, the broader community, both present and future, also benefits. The learners we empower will eventually contribute to society through their own endeavours, continuing a pattern of flourishing and love.



*“Peace be with you!
For the sake of the Lord,
I will seek your good.”
(Psalms 122)*

A SHARED COMMITMENT

Regardless of the specific role we have in education at any given time, we are all educational leaders. Educating youth unites responsibility with service, a transformative element of our vocation. In fact, teaching is a profession that fosters all others, motivating students to apply learning meaningfully as life-long, engaged and contributing citizens.

Grounded in Gospel values, Catholic education nurtures an inclusive learning culture of high expectations for all learners across all learning environments. Diversity is championed as a strength, so that students with different backgrounds and experiences are collectively inspired to achieve to their unique potential and promote the common good. Created in God’s image, all learners matter.

*“Our people believe in peace.
Our people believe in love.
We believe in responsibility.”
- Niigaan Sinclair*



FORWARD BY NIIGAAN SINCLAIR

I am pleased to contribute to this resource *Indigenous Knowledges: Joy, Beauty and Brilliance*, as there is nothing more important to Canada's future than the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Part of this is recognizing that every single part of Canadian society, culture, and economy is built by relationships with Indigenous communities.

During the 2022 Papal visit to Canada, the Pope pronounced: Indigenous cultures and traditions are unique and valuable, worthy on their own terms, and represent "the presence of God." Speaking to Canada's bishops and priests on how Catholicism will survive into the future, Pope Francis asked: "How about our relationships with those who are not 'one of our own,' with those who do not believe, with those who have different traditions and customs?" Pope Francis declared, "This is the way: to build relationships of fraternity with everyone, with indigenous brothers and sisters, with every sister and brother we meet, because the presence of God is reflected in each of their faces." The Pope went on to say: "Thinking about the process of healing and reconciliation with our indigenous brothers and sisters," he pronounced, "never again can the Christian community allow itself to be infected by the idea that one culture is superior to others, or that it is legitimate to employ ways of coercing others."

The impact of these words from Pope Francis is of a game-changer for Catholicism in Canada (and, let's hope, the world). It means that Indigenous languages, cultures, and ceremonies must be recognized as legitimate spiritual expressions by every member of the Catholic church. It means that any effort to destroy Indigenous traditions is to attack the "presence of God." While solutions to this challenge may feel overwhelming, to use the words of TRC Commissioner Murray Sinclair: "If it was education that got us in this mess, it will be education that gets us out of it."

This *Indigenous Knowledges: Joy, Beauty and Brilliance* document is meant to empower educators on how to begin to work with Indigenous communities, our knowledges, and protocols. It is not meant to replace living relationships with Indigenous knowledge holders but call those who want to evoke change to action. The questions, content and links to learning and activities in this resource are to guide educators when considering terminology, representation, sourcing information, all while centering on the dignity of each student in the classroom. This resource is designed by Indigenous peoples and their allies to help build a country different than we inherited, while following the guiding words of Pope Francis and his calls for a different, inclusive and conciliatory Catholic education system built on principles of reconciliation to be forged.

Miigwech for reading and for taking action.

Niigaan Sinclair

Professor, Department of Indigenous Studies University of Manitoba



A lil one had a dream in the middle of the night about sending out hearts to the world. Many people were saved that night. Her Medicine is still travelling and roaming the Earth in the hard to reach places. More people will be healed.

Photo Credit: Isaac Murdoch



“It is essential to show special care for Indigenous communities and their cultural traditions...For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values.” (LS, 146)

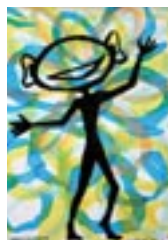
Photo Credit: Isaac Murdoch

THE ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS

Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy recognizes the values reflected in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs). The strategy confirms how the OCSGEs “respect and affirm the diversity and interdependence of the world’s peoples and cultures as well as the history, cultural heritage, and pluralism of our society.”⁵

The OCSGEs illustrate how Catholic social teaching thrives in Catholic schools. They form a unique means through which Catholic education educates the whole child throughout adolescence and into adulthood. As transferrable skills, the OCSGEs include competencies and attributes that help students prosper as contributing citizens into adulthood and beyond. By being provided with multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate the OCSGEs, graduates of Catholic schools are equipped to understand the value of applying their God-given potential throughout their lives. As a result, their relationships, decisions and activities will reflect Catholic social teaching, such as a concern for human dignity, achieving the common good, and the promotion of peace.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations — A Vision of the Learner



2. AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively responding critically in light of gospel values.



3. A REFLECTIVE, CREATIVE AND HOLISTIC THINKER who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.



4. A SELF-DIRECTED, RESPONSIBLE, LIFELONG LEARNER who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.



5. A COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTOR who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.



6. A CARING FAMILY MEMBER who attends to family, school, parish and wider community.



7. A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

SETTING THE FOUNDATION – INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

Catholic Social Teachings and Ontario Catholic School Graduation Expectations

As Catholic educators we are called to a higher standard in our educational spaces to ensure that all students feel welcomed and respected. We are guided by our Catholic Social Teaching as well as our Catholic Graduate Expectations in our efforts to empower students to become their full potential. When we consider the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission we are also called to learn alongside Indigenous Peoples and to create educational spaces for justice and the sacredness of life. The following sample reflective questions are to assist in achieving these goals.

SAMPLE REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- As a discerning believer, how do we promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good?
- As an effective communicator, how can we listen actively and critically?
- As a reflective, creative and holistic thinker, how can we make decisions with an informed moral conscience for the development of a just and compassionate society?
- As a self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner, how can we respond to, and constructively influence change in a discerning manner?
- As a collaborative contributor, how can we find meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good?
- As a responsible citizen, how can we promote peace, justice and the sacredness of life?

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION — INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

On November 14, 2018, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) released, *To Dream Together: Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights Dialogue report*. The report summarizes themes and recommendations from the OHRC's three-day dialogue event (February 21 to 23, 2018), which brought together First Nations, Métis and Inuit ("Indigenous") Elders and traditional knowledge keepers, along with academics, leaders, artists, advocates, lawyers, policy makers, and human rights institutions to discuss a vision of human rights that reflects Indigenous perspectives, world views and issues.

"Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships."
– The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future

Major themes explored in the report include:

- The qualities of meaningful engagement and reconciliation
- Indigenous perspectives on human rights
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous peoples' contribution to the evolution of human rights law
- Key Indigenous human rights concerns
- Recommended institutional responses

The report includes recommendations to the OHRC, other human rights institutions, organizations and governments. It calls for taking concrete actions towards reconciliation and human rights based on values of respect, honesty, sharing and strength. And it will serve as an important resource as the OHRC moves forward with its work on reconciliation.

UNITED DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The UNDRIP defines and explains what Indigenous Rights are and how they are to be protected, individually and collectively:

- outlines the minimum standards necessary for Indigenous Peoples' survival, dignity and well-being.
- addresses civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- also addresses rights of self-determination, non-discrimination and free, prior and informed consent.

Indigenous Peoples are the guardians of their knowledge systems, cultural and spiritual practices. They have the right to decide how knowledge is shared. The following are some examples of how these protections are outlined in the UNDRIP as they pertain to educational spaces:

Article 2: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

Article 8(1): Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

Article 12(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

Article 14(2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

Resources:

Upholding Rights in Education: A Guide for Educators in Understanding Indigenous Rights United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE — UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY

“It’s not easy to talk about #Reconciliation and then go about trying to make it happen. It takes courage and a lot of work. I want you to be brave, be courageous, stay the course...hold on to this idea that we are better together.”

– Chief Robert Joseph

As people of faith, we are called to denounce injustices when we see them and actively work to create just ways of living together in community. Colonialism is still ongoing today and the education system continues to uphold harmful narratives and ideologies. Our collective journey towards reconciliation requires us to become acutely aware of the unsettling truths and lived realities of Indigenous Peoples. This foundational knowledge can help to ensure those working to incorporate Indigenous knowledges, lived experiences, and contributions, will do so in a way that is accurate and appropriate. The following points provide key concepts to consider:

- Indigenous Peoples come from diverse, sophisticated and complex civilizations and nations.
- Indigenous Peoples are the guardians and caretakers of their ancestral lands and waters, with brilliant knowledge systems that are valid, important and valuable.
- Colonialism through the education system has dismissed, devalued and erased Indigenous Peoples’ histories, experiences as well as knowledge systems.
- Indigenous knowledge systems, pedagogies and methodologies can enhance curriculum and help to create transformative educational spaces rooted in respect, reciprocity and love.

Resources:

Importance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Wilfred Buck

21 things you may not know about the Indian Act

In Our Words Video Resource

Broken Promises

Gdoo-Sastamoo Kii Mi: This is Our Understanding



IDENTIFYING, DISRUPTING AND DISMANTLING COLONIALISM

“Acts of discrimination among persons and peoples for racist or other reasons-religious or ideological-and which lead to contempt and to the phenomena of exclusion, must be denounced and brought to light without hesitation and strongly rejected in order to promote equitable behavior, legislative dispositions and social structures.”

– The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society,
Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, 1988, #26

The education system continues to be a place of harm for Indigenous students. In order to confront and eliminate experiences of racism and colonialism, it is important to first be able to identify and name where, when and how this takes place. The following are examples of how harm towards Indigenous students can occur in schools and classrooms:

- Intention vs Impact
- Tokenism
- Pan Indigeneity
- Romanticism
- Extractivism
- Lack of knowledge and misinformation
- Cognitive imperialism
- Unconscious bias
- Harmful narratives

SPIRITUALITY, APPRECIATION AND APPROPRIATION

Providing students with examples (appreciation) of how beautiful and diverse Indigenous cultures are, can be a powerful experience for learning. However, replicating or reproducing (without permission), or mimicking cultural practices or ceremonies could be considered appropriation and a violation of Indigenous rights. It is important to remember that Indigenous Peoples are the guardians and interpreters of their knowledge systems and customary practices, and have the right to exercise, control and protect these. Spirituality and expressions associated with spirituality, is another area that has been largely appropriated and misunderstood by non-Indigenous people, resulting in the co-optation of rituals, the essentialization of Indigenous Peoples and the trivialization of their sacred items.

The following will provide examples of how educators can ensure that learning about different cultures does not cross over into the realm of appropriation or violate the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The examples below are taken from curriculum documents that articulate how to appropriately engage with Indigenous knowledges, artworks, cultures and/or customary practices.



“We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing.”

— Senator Murray Sinclair

NBE 3C/U: ENGLISH: UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT VOICES

Every culture has a distinct way of creating, passing on, using, and showing respect for its cultural text forms. Some cultural text forms are protected, according to Indigenous traditions. It is therefore critical for educators to understand that it may be necessary for them to engage with and seek direction from the specific Indigenous community from which a cultural text form originates before using it in a classroom setting.

Some cultural text forms, such as prayer, song, and music, are found across First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, while others are unique to particular groups. The chart that follows provides examples of the cultural text forms used by particular cultural groups. It highlights some of the rich forms of communication among Indigenous societies of the oral tradition in Canada.

Cultural Group	Example of Cultural Text Form	Meaning/Purpose	Mode of Communication
Blackfeet	Winter counts	Pictorial calendars or histories drawn on buffalo hides, with a representation of a significant event for each year.	To be viewed, read, and presented
Anishinaabe Ojibwe	Water song	A song sung by women, as the water keepers, to show respect and reverence for the spirit of water, in recognition of its sacredness and its immense importance to all of creation.	To be listened to
Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and other First Nations	Covenant Chain Belt of 1764	A wampum belt displaying symbols made from shells, beads, and string that records the agreement made at Niagara between the British and several First Nations.	To be viewed and read
Haudenosaunee	Thanksgiving address	Words spoken at the beginning of ceremonies and significant meetings to give thanks to the natural environment.	To be listened to

Cultural Group	Example of Cultural Text Form	Meaning/Purpose	Mode of Communication
Haudenosaunee	Guswenta or Kaswentha (Two Row Wampum)	A wampum belt displaying symbols made from shells and string that records an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century. Each row represents a nation, with the belt showing the nations co-existing without interfering in each other's affairs.	To be viewed and read
Métis	Beaded clothing	Items of clothing decorated with detailed beadwork, often in distinctive floral designs. Colours and patterns may convey aspects of Métis history, Métis teachings, and/or family identity.	To be viewed
Inuit/Inuvialuit	Drum dance	A combination of drumming and dance, traditionally performed by men. Drum dances may be used as a peaceful way to settle disputes.	To be listened to, viewed, and presented
Tsimshian	Button blanket	A robe decorated with white buttons forming images of an animal that represent the clan of the individual wearing the blanket.	To be viewed, read, and presented
Tsimshian	Dances such as the raven dance and the killer whale dance	Dances that communicate important stories about history and creation. Families and/or clans collect and protect these dances, which are passed from one generation to the next.	To be presented and viewed

“On this first step of my journey, I have wanted to make space for memory. Here, today, I am with you to recall the past, to grieve with you, to bow our heads together in silence and to pray before the graves. Let us allow these moments of silence to help us interiorize our pain. Silence. And prayer. In the face of evil, we pray to the Lord of goodness; in the face of death, we pray to the God of life. Our Lord Jesus Christ took a grave, which seemed the burial place of every hope and dream, leaving behind only sorrow, pain and resignation, and made it a place of rebirth and resurrection, the beginning of a history of new life and universal reconciliation.”
– Pope Francis, Maskwacis, Alta., July 25, 2022

NAC 10: EXPRESSIONS OF FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT CULTURES

“apply the creative process individually and/or collaboratively to create art works, including integrated art works/productions, that draw on their exploration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives to express their own personal world views, histories, or cultures.”

What you should do	What you should NOT do
Provide examples of Indigenous artworks and artists.	Replicate or reproduce Indigenous artworks (**unless permission has been granted by the artist).
Read, watch or listen to learn about various cultural practices.	Replicate or mimic cultural practices (e.g., a non-Indigenous teacher smudging).
Consult with Indigenous Education Lead at your school board or recognized Indigenous community member.	Conduct activities in your class that pass on teachings, cultural or spiritual practices that do not belong to you (e.g., making dream catchers).

Resources:

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Arts Protocols

DPC Webinar Indigenous Peoples, Spirituality & Dream Catchers

Classroom Resources:

Exploring Indigenous Artists

Exploring Indigenous Music Makers

Exploring Art for Action



Photo Credit: Kim Kirk, View from Fort Frances Residential School



“We must seek to resist and undo injustices we have not ceased, least we become bystanders who tacitly endorse evil and so share in guilt in it.”
— *Brothers and Sisters to Us, US Catholic Bishops, '79*

GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES — INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

Terminology Matters

- Use correct terminology and names of nations and communities (e.g., Anishinaabek Nation, Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation).
- Capitalize and pluralize Indigenous Peoples as they come from many different nations
- Avoid colonial names and outdated terms (e.g., Aboriginal, Iroquois, Native).
- Avoid using possessive language (e.g., Canada’s Indigenous Peoples, our Indigenous brothers and sisters).
- Avoid imposing nationhood on people (e.g., Indigenous Canadian).
- Avoid using acronyms as this dehumanizes people (e.g., FNMI).
- Avoid referring to Indigenous Peoples and nations in the past tense.

Representation Matters

- Be aware of ongoing erasure (e.g., map of Canada and not Indigenous nations) and power imbalances in the curriculum and look for ways to re-center Indigenous voices and decenter whiteness.
- Balance the narrative being presented. Include twice as much representation of joy, beauty and brilliance as there is on how much content focuses on the impacts of colonialism, trauma and violence.
- Be aware of harmful and single narratives.
- Include stories of resistance and resilience.
- Include learning and activities that will ensure Indigenous students feel empowered and supported in their expressions of identity.
- Celebrate achievements and contributions.
- When referencing ‘stories’ be sure to refer to them as important sources of information (scientific, geographical, mathematical, etc.) and powerful ways for knowledge transfer as opposed to being referenced as myths, legends and lore.
- Avoid media and texts that have non-Indigenous protagonist(s) who are portrayed as saving Indigenous People (e.g., white saviorism).
- Include representation of Inuit and Métis as well as First Nations.

Resources

Celebrating Excellence, Achievements and Inspiration



“We must be ready to learn from one another, not claiming that we alone possess all truth and that somehow we have a corner on God.”
— *Desmond Tutu*

Sourcing Matters

- Use credible websites (e.g., www.fnmieao.com) to ensure that information is valid, reliable and accredited.
- Avoid general internet searches.
- Avoid using content that has generalized references (e.g., Native American wisdom).
- Respect intellectual and cultural property. Garner consent from the source and always cite all sources of the information, person and community.
- Indigenous peoples have the right to control, protect, and determine how their knowledges are shared. Ensure that you consult first with Indigenous community partners (from the nation to which the knowledge belongs) when encountering key concepts related to ancestral or traditional knowledge systems and/or cultural practices.
- Include primary sources (e.g., Treaty partners, local First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous authors and scholars).
- Creation stories or other stories are only used if properly sourced by legitimate and specific Indigenous people and/or community and/or nation (e.g., where the story was told, when it was told and who told it).
- Texts written about Indigenous identities are in first voice (e.g., written by an individual who identifies within the community they are writing about).

Resources

Indigenous Arts Protocols

Check the Tag on that Indian Story

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Association of Ontario



“It’s time for the rest of us Canadians to understand these stories and understand what it means to be a Canadian. Because I do believe, since the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and then the apology of the Prime Minister, that Canadians are experiencing a sort of existential crisis — who are we? What is this country? We’ve been told who we are and it doesn’t fit with these descriptors.”

— Kathleen Mahoney, Chief Negotiator, Residential schools settlement

Centering Dignity in Classroom Activities

- Ensure that students encounter the sophistication and complexity of diverse Indigenous civilizations and nations.
- Choose activities that will uphold the dignity of Indigenous students without perpetuating harmful stereotypes or trauma.
- Avoid activities that require students to take on the role/voice/perspective of an Indigenous person (e.g., no debates, plays, reenactments, etc.).
- Include learning opportunities that connect directly with the land.
- Provide students with the opportunity to engage in learning and activities that encourage social action, justice and agency.
- Choose activities that are identity affirming.
- Make connections between historical and present day events to understand how colonialism is still active.
- Make connections between colonialism, resource extraction and climate change, as well as how this affects everyone.
- Refrain from Indigenizing Catholic traditions and practices unless working directly with Indigenous community members.
- Use inquiry to explore unfamiliar content rather than avoid it.
- Allow for student choice and agency when considering assignments, assessments and evaluation tasks.

Resources

Lesson Plans for Secondary

Lesson Plans for Elementary

Douglas Sinclair: The Importance of Learning From the Land

Learning From The Land

Colonialism and Climate Change

Understanding Indigenous Rights

The Marshall Decision and Mi’kmaq Commercial Fishing Rights: An Explainer

Resources to Assist Students in Understanding Wet’Suwet’en: Protecting Indigenous Rights

Solidarity with 1492 Land Back Lane

Cottagers and Indians

Lessons From the Earth and Beyond



“When we see others as the enemy, we risk becoming what we hate. When we oppress others, we end up oppressing ourselves. All of our humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity in others.”

– Desmond Tutu

Photo Credit: Aliqa Illauq

Connect and Consult with your Indigenous Education Lead

Every school board has an Indigenous Education Lead as well as an Indigenous Education Council (IEC).

“Leads work closely with senior board administration, including the superintendent responsible for Indigenous education, school board staff and Indigenous Education Councils. The IECs guide school boards and schools in building stronger relationships with communities, sharing information, identifying promising practices and enhancing collaborative work to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement and well-being” (Ministry of Education).

Resources

Unsettling Canada: A National Wake Up Call

The Reconciliation Manifesto

Whose Land is it Anyway?

Discourses of Difference: Cognitive Imperialism, Culturalism and Diversity

Trick or Treaty

How to Change Systemic Racism in Canada

Is it really genocide? In Canada?

“We want to walk together, to pray together and to work together, so that the sufferings of the past can lead to a future of justice, healing and reconciliation.”

– Pope Francis, Maskwacis, Alta., July 25, 2022



Bead-work Credit: Naomi Smith

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES: JOY, BEAUTY AND BRILLIANCE GUIDELINES

Sourcing Information

- The information comes from a reputable source that provides evidence of vetting for accuracy.
- I did not use broad, general Google searches as a source of information.
- Information and content is properly cited to reference a legitimate Indigenous individual and/or community/specific nation.
- Informed consent has been provided when working with Indigenous knowledge systems.
- Primary sources have been used.
- I avoid spreading misinformation by attributing practices specific from one nation/community to another (pan-Indigeneity).

Terminology

- Correct terminology and names of nations and communities are used.
- Indigenous Peoples are pluralized and capitalized.
- There is no use of possessive language.
- Indigenous Nationhood is reflected and respected.
- Canadian citizenship is not being imposed on Indigenous Peoples or nations (e.g., Indigenous Canadian).
- No use of acronyms for people (e.g., FNMI).
- Indigenous Peoples are not referred to in the past tense.
- Language reflects that Indigenous Peoples have always lived on this land.

Learning Activities

- Learning opportunities have been designed with the understanding that there will be Indigenous students engaging with the material, but does not require students to disclose their identity.
- Activities do not ask students to replicate or mimic artwork (unless permission granted), but rather make connections to their own lived experiences.
- No activities require students to take on the role/voice/perspective of an Indigenous person (e.g., debates, plays, reenactments, etc.).
- Activities ensure Indigenous students feel empowered and supported in their expressions of identity.
- Activities do not engage in cultural or spiritual practices (e.g., smudging, medicine wheels, 7 Grandfather teachings, etc.) unless they are delivered by a recognized Indigenous community member.
- Learning opportunities that connect directly with the land have been included.
- Students are given opportunities to learn about local Indigenous communities and/or treaty partners.
- Students are provided with the opportunity to engage in learning and activities that encourage social action, justice and agency.
- Indigenous students are neither singled out, nor called upon to be experts or teach material.

Representation

- Material (e.g., texts, media) about Indigenous identities, perspectives, histories are in first voice, by the individual who identifies within the community they are speaking about.
- The information I am choosing presents Indigenous Peoples and/or Indigenous knowledge systems as sophisticated, diverse and complex.
- The information I am choosing does not tokenize, minimize or perpetuate stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples and/or Indigenous knowledge systems.
- If I reference or use the term 'story' I don't equate it to myths, legends or lore but rather methods for knowledge transference (e.g., geological records, historical accounts, mathematical ideas, etc.).
- Creation stories or other stories are only used if properly sourced by legitimate and specific Indigenous people and/or community and/or nation (e.g., where the story was told, when it was told and who told it).
- Information presented does not solely focus on impacts of colonialism, trauma and violence. There is equal if not more content to showcase the joy, beauty, brilliance and ingenuity of Indigenous Peoples.
- Narratives of resistance and resilience have been included.
- Achievements and contributions of Indigenous Peoples are included.
- I have avoided media and texts that have non-Indigenous protagonist(s) who are portrayed as saving Indigenous People (e.g., white saviorism).
- I reference specific nations and communities to avoid pan-Indigeneity.
- I have included representation of Inuit and Métis as well as First Nations.
- I have included a diverse representation of identities.
- Information and content does not perpetuate harmful and/or single narratives.
- Information and content does not glorify colonization.

“Love is something you and I must have. We must have it because our spirit feeds upon it. We must have it because without it we become weak and faint. Without love our self-esteem weakens. Without it our courage fails. Without love we can no longer look out confidently at the world.”
– Chief Dan George of the Tseil-Waututh Nation of Canada, actor, musician, poet and author



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