

Messy Church Reconciliation for Home Use

We are happy to provide you with this resource to allow families and their children to continue to learn about the church's reconciliation work. This package includes 3 different at home sessions that can be printed, small amounts of materials may be needed for a few of them and will be clearly shown. Please feel free to contact Fiona Brownlee at f.brownlee@edmonton.anglican.ca if you have any questions or concerns.

There will be three separate sessions, our suggestion is that the first should be done in the spring, the second should be done around the summer solstice, and the third be done in the fall. The first one is Have a Heart, the second one is Creation, the third is Orange Shirt Day. If those timings don't work for you feel free to use them when best works for your families.

Parish leadership please read over the whole package so that you can be sure what materials are needed for the activities that will be needed to be included.

Session One: Have a Heart

Welcome to our Messy Church Reconciliation for Home Use. This session focuses on our response to Indian Residential Schools and how as families we can take first steps in living out our call from God to be reconcilers with First Nations in our communities.

1. Land acknowledgement - go to <https://native-land.ca/> and put in your address to find out the Indigenous background of your home. With your family come up with a land acknowledgement. As an example here is one that a group of children in Wetaskiwin came up with, feel free to use this if that makes it easier:

We are all Treaty 6 people.
We are First Nations.
We are people who are welcomed to live here.
We know that we share the land.
We respect those who were here first.
We will live together with love.

2. Residential School Story: Take out the colouring page and give it to the children. Talk for a moment about the image - a mother with her children giving the whole family roots. Have the children colour the picture while you are sharing with them these poems are from a survivor of residential schools. Read each poem slowly and carefully. Joanne Jones is a member of St. Faith's, Edmonton.

Prairie Woman

I am from the prairie
Born a Cree
Strong and free
But only to a degree.

They came and took me away
For being a Cree was a
Threat to some.

Strong and free I will stand.
I am from the prairie you see.

But to no avail
This Cree will prevail.

Just to show that they
Could fail. Fail to take
The Cree away from the prairie.

I will be strong and free.
I am from the prairie you see.

- Willow Woman (Joanne Jones), November 30th, 2008

Torn

A family torn is a family
That needs to be reborn

When will you take
Out the thorn
For when we were born
We were adored
Where did it go wrong

Let's be strong and
Let the thorn be torn
Away.
And make our family strong
And let the wrong be gone

To be torn is like a
Storm so strong
Let our family be reborn
To form a strong family bond

- Willow Woman (Joanne Jones)

After having read the poems have everyone say a word or two about what they heard and how they are feeling about what happened in Canada.

3. Heart Craft

Materials needed: card stock, markers, ribbons, stickers, wooden skewer (like the ones used for barbecuing kebabs), tape, scissors

Instructions: Cut out heart for everyone and explain that today they are going to decorate a heart that remembers the children who went to residential schools and especially those children who didn't return to their families. Suggest they may want to write **We are Sorry, You are Loved, We will Remember**, or something like that on their heart. Let them decorate their hearts as they want and then have them tape the skewer to the back of the heart.

4. Action:

Take your heart to your parish and plant it in the ground around the chokecherry tree. Over time there should be a number of hearts planted around the tree. Say the following prayer together after you have put your hearts in the ground.

Four Directions Prayer

Have everyone turn to the east

Creator, thank you for this day

Have everyone turn to the south

Creator, thank you for teaching us this day

Have everyone turn to the west

Creator, thank you for the four seasons

Have everyone turn to the north

Creator, thank you for being in our circle

Have everyone turn back to the east to complete the circle

Amen.



Session Two: Creation

Welcome to our Messy Church Reconciliation for Home Use. This session focuses on creation and how God speaks through it and shares a creation story from the Plains Cree.

1. Land acknowledgement - go to <https://native-land.ca/> and put in your address to find out the Indigenous background of your home. With your family come up with a land acknowledgement. As an example here is one that a group of children in Wetaskiwin came up with, feel free to use this if that makes it easier:

We are all Treaty 6 people.
We are First Nations.
We are people who are welcomed to live here.
We know that we share the land.
We respect those who were here first.
We will live together with love.

2. Creation Stories - hand out the colouring page that is with this session. Talk about the image on the paper a turtle with North America imposed on it. As a family talk about the story we know from Genesis of God creating the world. Have everyone share a word that reminds of us God's creation. Then share the following story from the Plains Cree.

Story - The Wandering Spirit

Here is the original story as it was told by an elder.
A Reading from "The Story of Wandering Spirit," as told by Walter Bonaise

Wandering Spirit would travel around and speak to whatever Nanabush would create. Wandering Spirit asked the man and the woman, "Are you satisfied with the way Nanabush made you?" "Yeah, but there are only two of us; we need more people. How can that be done? We only have one language; we will need more languages because this land is very big." Wandering Spirit asked them, "What do you mean—more people?" "Well," they said, "we need more people because this land is going to be a big country. We have four directions, so we also need to send people to all these directions. Then we can travel across this land to visit each other.

"We need to know who we are as a people," the man and woman said." "I will give you names, like Nehiwayak," said Wandering Spirit, "and I will give you more than one language. Where do you want me to send these people?"

She sent some up north, gave them a language and gave them ceremonies. Then she went east—put people all the way down to the big lake, as far as she could, and gave

them a certain language and certain ceremonies, because we cannot just have one ceremony and one language. “They must be different,” said the man and woman, “so we can understand the land and the creations and how everything is connected—in the future.”

So Wandering Spirit did that—first to the north and east, and then she went south. She created people all the way to the other big lake—giving them languages and different kinds of ceremonies. Then she went west and created more people, languages and ceremonies.

And Wandering Spirit told them that they will be very rich people. For spiritual life, all they had to do was listen to everything that was around them. They would begin to understand who they were and why they were put on earth—to live in harmony with everything else. That’s what happened.

Once Wandering Spirit finished all that, she went back to the man and woman. “Now what?” she said. “We have people, languages and ceremonies,” said the man and woman. “What else?” said Wandering Spirit. “I think we’ve got everything; we need to concentrate on our ceremonies so that we understand. Everybody has to have an understanding of the ceremonies in relationship to nature.”

From *Listening to elders telling stories sitting in a circle : an oral history* / told by Walter Bonaise ; transcribed by Karen Hovelkamp ; artwork by Gerald Folster ; 2nd edition (Edmonton : Bonaise Publishing, 2012), Chapter 1, part 2, p. 22, 31-32

Take a moment to have everyone react to this story. What does it tell us about the origins of different people and the importance of languages and ceremonies?

3. Creation Craft

Materials needed: 3 or 4 feathers (coloured or natural), card stock, 2 or 3 pieces of brightly coloured construction paper, tissue paper, pencil crayons, scissors, glue sticks

Instructions: On the piece of card stock figure out what you love about creation - mountains, grasslands, flowers, animals, people- use the materials and have everyone make their picture of God’s creation. Find a place in your home to show them off.

4. Action

Take a walk outside as a family and notice all of God's creation being good - the insects, the birds, other people and other animals you see. Together find a place where you can do the following prayer:

Four Directions Prayer

Have everyone turn to the east

Creator, thank you for this day

Have everyone turn to the south

Creator, thank you for teaching us this day

Have everyone turn to the west

Creator, thank you for the four seasons

Have everyone turn to the north

Creator, thank you for being in our circle

Have everyone turn back to the east to complete the circle

Amen.

TURTLE ISLAND



By Gerald R. Glade

Session Three - Orange Shirt Day

Welcome to our Messy Church Reconciliation for Home Use. This session focuses on Orange Shirt Day. Orange Shirt Day is September 30th and it is hoped that this session will be used around the time of that remembrance. For more information about Orange Shirt Day check out <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/> which is the official website for this work.

1. Land acknowledgement - go to <https://native-land.ca/> and put in your address to find out the Indigenous background of your home. With your family come up with a land acknowledgement. As an example here is one that a group of children in Wetaskiwin came up with, feel free to use this if that makes it easier:

We are all Treaty 6 people.

We are First Nations.

We are people who are welcomed to live here.

We know that we share the land.

We respect those who were here first.

We will live together with love.

2. Phyllis' Story

The following story is in Phyllis Webstad's words and is found here: <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/phyllis-story.html> You can find more about her on that site. She has also written a children's story book which you can find through your local library. As you prepare to tell the story hand the children the colouring page included with this sessions.

I went to the Mission for one school year in 1973/1974. I had just turned 6 years old. I lived with my grandmother on the Dog Creek reserve. We never had very much money, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to the Mission school. I remember going to Robinson's store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had string laced up in front, and was so bright and exciting – just like I felt to be going to school!

When I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt! I never wore it again. I didn't understand why they wouldn't give it back to me, it was mine! The colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared.

I was 13. 8 years old and in grade 8 when my son Jeremy was born. Because my grandmother and mother both attended residential school for 10 years each, I never knew what a parent was supposed to be like. With the help of my aunt, Agness Jack, I was able to raise my son and have him know me as his mother.

I went to a treatment centre for healing when I was 27 and have been on this healing journey since then. I finally get it, that the feeling of worthlessness and insignificance, ingrained in me from my first day at the mission, affected the way I lived my life for many years. Even now, when I know nothing could be further than the truth, I still sometimes feel that I don't matter. Even with all the work I've done!

I am honoured to be able to tell my story so that others may benefit and understand, and maybe other survivors will feel comfortable enough to share their stories.

Take a moment and have everyone say one word about how they are feeling about Phyllis' story.

3. Orange Shirt Day Craft

Materials needed: shirt outline, orange card stock or orange construction paper, scissors, markers

Instructions: Cut out the shirt outline and then trace it onto the orange construction paper. Cut the shirt out. Together think of some words or phrases to show that 'Every Child Matters'. Write those on your shirts. Then put designs on that represent the phrase you have put on your shirt. Find somewhere in home to put the shirts up and remember all those that went to residential schools.

4. Action

As a family participate in the Orange Shirt Day activities taking place at your church, schools or community. Take time to remember this important piece of Canadian history. Say this prayer together to finish off your time exploring this theme.

Four Directions Prayer

Have everyone turn to the east

Creator, thank you for this day

Have everyone turn to the south

Creator, thank you for teaching us this day

Have everyone turn to the west

Creator, thank you for the four seasons

Have everyone turn to the north

Creator, thank you for being in our circle

Have everyone turn back to the east to complete the circle

Amen.



