



Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

Learning Guide



First Nations Child & Family
Caring Society of Canada

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Three cheers for Sylvia Smith and Lisa Howell for their guidance and feedback!

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Design: Leah Gryfe Designs

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About the Book

Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams is written by Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. The book was illustrated and art directed by [Amanda Strong](#),¹ with additional illustration by Maya McKibbon, Dora Cepic, Rasheed Banda, and Alex Mesa. Design and layout are by [Leah Gryfe](#).²

For more information about *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*, please visit [Spirit Bear's website](#)³ or email info@fncaringsociety.com.⁴



Look for *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams* at your local bookstore. Educational institutions can contact [University of Toronto Press Distribution](#)⁵ or [Ampersand Inc.](#)⁶



- 1 <https://www.spottedfawnproductions.com>
- 2 <http://www.leahgryfedesigns.com>
- 3 <https://fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBear>
- 4 [mailto: info@fncaringsociety.com](mailto:info@fncaringsociety.com)
- 5 <https://utorontopress.com>
- 6 <https://ampersandinc.ca>

Introduction

In *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*, Spirit Bear continues his work as a *Bearrister*, learning about injustice and helping to make things right. On his way home from a sacred ceremony, Spirit Bear meets Jake, a friendly dog on his way to help plant a heart garden in honour of the children forced to go to residential schools for the closing ceremony of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) at Rideau Hall. While helping out, Spirit Bear learns more about the harm of residential schools, the work the TRC has been up to, and its 94 Calls to Action – things governments, courts, businesses, schools, and people living in Canada can do to make things right and support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in their fight for justice. The students he meets tell Spirit Bear about treaties, how the government has broken its treaty promises and made laws that hurt Indigenous peoples and the land and water. On his journey with Jake to the TRC's closing ceremony, Spirit Bear learns ways to honour the kids that had to go to residential schools and help end the unfairness that still hurts Indigenous children and families today.

Following in the footsteps of earlier reports, the TRC told Canadians about the significant harms of residential schools, and how their legacy lives on in the ongoing discrimination of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, families, and communities in Canada. At the time this guide was written, only 10 of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action had been fully accomplished (learn more [here](#)⁷).

In 2007, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Caring Society for short) and the Assembly of First Nations filed a complaint alleging Canada is racially discriminating against First Nations children by providing less child welfare funding on reserves. Nine years later, in 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal determined that the Government of Canada is discriminating against 165,000 First Nations children by providing less funding to keep First Nations children safe in their communities and by not fully implementing Jordan's Principle ensuring First Nations children get the services they need when they need them. While progress has been made, the Tribunal continues to hold Canada in non-compliance with its orders as it has not yet ended the discrimination (learn more about [the case](#)⁸ and [Jordan's Principle](#)⁹). The lack of equitable, culturally-relevant services on reserves contributes to the removal of First Nations children from their families

7 <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>

8 <https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness>

9 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

and the over-representation of Indigenous children in child welfare care. This inequity is further amplified by shortfalls in education funding, housing, and infrastructure.

Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams was written to engage children in learning about discrimination, colonialism, and reconciliation. Senator Murray Sinclair, former Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, wisely said about reconciliation:

“This is not an Aboriginal problem. This is a Canadian problem. Because at the same time that Aboriginal people were being demeaned in the [residential] schools and their culture and language were being taken away from them and they were being told that they were inferior ... and that they were unworthy of being respected that very same message was being given to the non-Aboriginal children in the public schools as well... They need to know that history includes them” (As cited in CBC News, 2015).

The Caring Society continues to be inspired by young people’s capacity and motivation to recognize injustice and act for change. To activate this potential, and for discrimination against Indigenous people to end in Canada, we need to create opportunities for ourselves and our students to understand and identify colonialism and take tangible steps towards ending the injustice it facilitates.



How to Use This Guide

Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams is a conceptually rich text that offers points of entry into understanding and unpacking colonialism in Canada. While engaging with this content, it is important to highlight that the injustices addressed in the book are still happening. This guide encourages learning about historical and contemporary inequities for First Nations children, families and communities through residential schools, colonial laws, and treaties. It is organized according to four key topics addressed in the story:

- Honouring Children Who Went to Residential Schools Through Orange Shirt Day and Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams
- Reflecting on Land and Treaty Relationships
- Understanding the Indian Act
- Honouring Indigenous Veterans

The content addressed in this book and learning guide respond to TRC's Call to Action 62 calling for the creation of "age appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students.

Each topic presents suggestions for guiding questions, learning goals, learning activities, and resources where you and your students can learn more. Important concepts are also highlighted and defined in the glossary at the end of the guide.

The content offered provides opportunities for teachers to develop curricular targets across multiple subject areas. The guiding questions, learning goals, activities, and resources engage and connect to the curricular expectations of Social Studies, English Language Arts, Art and other subjects.



Honouring Children Who Went to Residential Schools: Orange Shirt Day and Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

From the Book

“Another student named Elmer continued, ‘For over 100 years, the Government of Canada removed First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children from their families and put them in residential schools that were run by churches.’” (p. 15).

Learning Goals

Words in **bold** are explained in the glossary

As learners, we're all working to be able to:

- describe **residential schools** and explain why the Government of Canada set them up.
- explain how residential schools hurt **Indigenous** kids, their families, communities, and nations;
- take it further: Make connections between residential schools and ongoing **discrimination** against First Nations children, Inuit and Métis children;
- describe **reconciliation**, what it means, and why it is important;
- after or while participating in Orange Shirt Day and Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams, explain the meaning of these activities and their connection to reconciliation;
- form ethical opinions about residential schools and reconciliation (for guidance on developing learning that is connected to the spirit, body, mind, and heart, check out Spirit Bear's holistic learning diagram at the end of the guide);
- participate in meaningful actions that support reconciliation.

Guiding Questions

- What were residential schools? Why did the government set them up and force Indigenous kids to go to them?
- How did residential schools hurt Indigenous kids, families, and communities?
 - Take it further: In what ways does the government continue to hurt Indigenous kids? In what ways do the impacts of residential schools continue to harm Indigenous children and their families today?
- What does reconciliation mean? Why is it important?
- How does participating in Orange Shirt Day and Honouring Memories, Planting dreams support reconciliation?
- What actions can we take in support of reconciliation? How are we going to do it?

Lesson and Learning Activity Ideas

- Engage with these [Building Bridges \(Grade 5 and up\) lesson plans](#)¹⁰ on Phyllis Webstad's experience that are endorsed by the Orange Shirt Day Society.
- Learn about Chanie Wenjack's story by engaging with *The Secret Path* with your class.
 - Get ready for learning by doing the warm-up activities on p. 10 of this [lesson plan](#),¹¹ including brainstorming recipes for active listening and sharing one's story, engaging students in a discussion about what they already know about residential schools, letting them know they will be witnessing someone's painful story, and agreeing on their jobs as listeners.
 - As students watch the film, invite them to jot down any feelings, questions, and thoughts that come up. After viewing, give them a chance to discuss what they wrote with a peer if they want to or write in a journal. Lead a class discussion where students have the option of talking about their feelings and thoughts about the film.
 - Close by inviting students to reflect on the question: What have we learned about residential schools from Chanie's story? Return to the guiding questions, address the ones you can, and save the rest for later. Students can develop and show their answers in many ways: through a drawing, poem, mindmap, journal entry, voice recording, etc.

¹⁰ <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/teacher-resources.html>

¹¹ https://www.orangeshirtday.org/uploads/7/9/8/7/79871818/new_master_bb_lev.3_no.1-2019-20.pdf

- Engage with these [multidisciplinary lesson plans](#)¹² made by Instructor Mitch Champagne and his class of teacher candidates at Trent University on The Secret Path's album tracks (Grades 4 to 8).
- Celebrate Orange Shirt Day by taking action for reconciliation. Actions might include:
 - Inviting community members to an Orange Shirt Day event as an opportunity for students to share their learning about residential schools, reconciliation, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Students can share their learning through a medium that works for them: poetry, presentations, posters, movies, visual art, etc.
 - Sending letters to government representatives demanding action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. [Spirit Bear's Guide to the TRC's Calls to Action](#)¹³ breaks them down in student-friendly language and CBC's [Beyond 94](#)¹⁴ tracks the government's progress in getting them done.
 - Research issues of inequity in Indigenous communities today, such as lack of clean water, inequitable funding for education and healthcare, and lack of access to services and opportunities.
 - Collaborate with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and/or community members to create a memorial to children forced to go to residential schools and their families in your school. Frame this memorial as a reminder to take action for reconciliation rather than a one-time exercise. Consider engaging with [Project of Heart](#)¹⁵ which guides learning communities through the creation of a collective memorial that honours residential school survivors and those who didn't survive. [Learn more here](#).¹⁶

12 https://www.trentu.ca/education/sites/trentu.ca.education/files/documents/SecretPathLessons_MASTER_2017-10-25.pdf

13 https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/child_friendly_calls_to_action_web.pdf

14 <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>

15 <http://projectofheart.ca/>

16 <http://projectofheart.ca/tiles/>

- Celebrate Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams with your class by planting a heart garden that represents your commitment to reconciliation and acknowledges the ongoing inequities faced by Indigenous children and their families. Before getting your hands dirty, spend some time getting to know the TRC's Calls to Action with [Spirit Bear's child-friendly guide](#)¹⁷ and then support learners in choosing a Call to Action that's important to them and creating a personal goal to help make it happen. [This learning activity](#)¹⁸ by the Caring Society offers steps on how to do that.

Where to Learn More

Student-Friendly Learning Resources

- [When We Were Alone](#)¹⁹ (Grades 1 to 3) by David A. Robertson and Julie Flett. Order the book for your school or watch a free read aloud with your students on YouTube.
- [The Secret Path project](#)²⁰ (Grades 2 to 7) by Gord Downie, Jeff Lemire, and team.
- In [Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams PSA](#)²¹ students talk about the connection between Honouring Memories Planting Dreams and reconciliation.
- Spirit Bear's 2nd book [Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams](#).²²
- In [Namwayut: we are all one. Truth and Reconciliation in Canada](#),²³ a short animated video, Chief Robert Joseph shares his experience as a residential school survivor.
- CBC's [Residential School Map](#).²⁴
- The Legacy of Hope's [Where are the Children Exhibition](#)²⁵ (Grades 4 and up; although younger learners may make meaning from the historical photos).
- The Legacy of Hope's [100 Years of Loss Exhibition](#)²⁶ (Grades 4 and up).

17 https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/child_friendly_calls_to_action_web.pdf

18 https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/finding_our_place_in_reconciliation_activity.pdf

19 <https://www.cbc.ca/books/when-we-were-alone-1.4119444>

20 <https://secretpath.ca/#Film>

21 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uO7KE66Rq1Q>

22 https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/spirit_bear_fishing_for_knowledge_catching_dreams_ebook.pdf

23 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zuRQmwaREY>

24 <https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/beyond-94-residential-school-map/>

25 <http://wherearethechildren.ca/en/>

26 <http://100yearsofloss.ca/en/>

Teacher-Friendly Learning Resources

- The Caring Society's [Reconciling History](https://fncaringsociety.com/reconciling-history)²⁷ page and [A History of Inequity](https://fncaringsociety.com/reconciling-history-timeline)²⁸ timeline.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [Reports and Calls to Action](https://nctr.ca/reports2.php).²⁹
- Historica Canada's [podcast and video series](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools-podcast-series)³⁰ about residential schools.
- The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA People's [Final Reports and Calls for Justice](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/).³¹



27 <https://fncaringsociety.com/reconciling-history>

28 <https://fncaringsociety.com/reconciling-history-timeline>

29 <https://nctr.ca/reports2.php>

30 <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools-podcast-series>

31 <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

Reflecting on Land and Treaty Relationships

In the Book

Near the beginning of this story, Spirit Bear says he lives on the territory of the Algonquin Nation. Later on, he learns about treaties from his friend, Elmer.

Learning Goals

Words in **bold** are explained in the glossary.

- As learners, we're working to be able to:
- Understand and explain that **Indigenous peoples** have lived on and have had a special relationship to the land since 'time immemorial', meaning forever.
- Understand and explain the role of **settlers** who came to Canada.
- Describe what **title** means, what **treaties** are, and how and why treaties were made.
- Identify whose land we live on and any treaties that were made about how to share the land.
- Consider and compare the **Crown** and Indigenous peoples' different understandings of land and treaties.
- Consider and compare how treaties affected Indigenous peoples and how they affected the Crown or the Government of Canada.
- Make ethical opinions about treaties and our responsibilities to treaties (for guidance on developing learning that is connected to the spirit, body, mind, and heart, check out Spirit Bear's holistic learning diagram at the end of the guide).
- Identify the difference between **treaty territory** and **unceded territory**.
- Explain what a **land acknowledgement** is and why they're important.
- Collaborate to create a land acknowledgement.

Guiding Questions

- What does it mean to live on Indigenous territory? What does Indigenous title mean? Whose territory are you on right now?
- What are treaties? How did they come to be? Why were they made? What kinds of promises were made?

- How did treaties affect Indigenous peoples? How did treaties affect the Crown/the Government of Canada and settlers?
- Who is responsible for making sure treaties are upheld? What are our treaty responsibilities? How are we going to meet them?
- Some people in Canada live on unceded Indigenous territory. What does that mean? How is it different from living on a territory where a treaty was signed?
- What is a land acknowledgement? Why are land acknowledgements important?

Lesson and Learning Activity Ideas

- Invite an Indigenous Elder, Knowledge Keeper, community member, author or guest speaker to talk about your area's history. For guidance on hosting Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers or other guests respectfully, consult this guide by Carleton University's Centre for Indigenous Initiatives' [Guidelines for Working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Elders and Knowledge Keepers](#).³²
- Invite students to engage with *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids* special issue, [We Are All Treaty People](#)³³ and work through as many of the guiding questions as they can in a way that works best for them. Consider giving students options in how they demonstrate their answers (e.g., by presenting, drawing, writing, acting and moving, etc.).
- Research your treaty history. If a treaty was made about the area you live on, collaboratively make a poster or display a bulletin board about the treaty that answers these questions.
 - Whose land is the treaty about?
 - Who made the treaty?
 - When and where was it signed?
 - What did the treaty mean to the Indigenous groups who signed it?
 - What did the treaty mean to the Government of Canada or the Crown?
 - What did each group agree to do?
 - Has the Government of Canada kept its promises?
 - What are our responsibilities to the treaty?

32 <https://carleton.ca/indigenous/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-for-Working-with-Indigenous-Elders.pdf>

33 <http://www.canadashistory.ca/getmedia/e491995f-0d3a-44a0-aa74-04d22901308c/Kay2018Treaties.pdf.aspx>

- If you're located on unceded territory, you can make a display about the Royal Proclamation. Start by reading about it on page 6 of Kayak's "We Are All Treaty People" and then work together to answer these questions.
 - Whose land are we located on?
 - What is the Royal Proclamation? What does it say? Why was it made?
 - How did Indigenous peoples feel about it?
 - How did settlers feel about it?
 - Was it respected? If the Royal Proclamation says settlers weren't allowed onto Indigenous land unless the government made a treaty with Indigenous peoples, how did settlers end up living here?
- To wrap up, students can reflect on whether they think the treaty or the way settlers took over the land was fair and what needs to be done about this today.
- Learn to acknowledge the territory. Find your territory and learn about the Indigenous nations in your area. Once your class has found out whose territory you live on, here are some other actions:
 - If you can, reach out to the Indigenous nations and organizations in your area to learn the best way to acknowledge the territory and ways that you can help care for the land.
 - Invite students to share the responsibility of acknowledging the territory during morning announcements.
 - Teach others in the school about the territory your school is on, your responsibilities to the Indigenous peoples you share the land with, and ways you can all care for the land.

Where to Learn More

Student-friendly Resources

- [*Kayak Magazine's Treaty issue*](#)³⁴ (Grades 2 to 7). Request accompanying lesson plans and other resources here.
- [*Whose Land?*](#)³⁵ is a web-based app that uses GIS technology to assist learners of all ages in identifying Indigenous Nations, territories, and Indigenous communities across Canada. [*Native Land*](#)³⁶ is another helpful resource.

34 <http://www.canadashistory.ca/getmedia/e491995f-0d3a-44a0-aa74-04d22901308c/Kay2018Treaties.pdf.aspx>

35 <https://www.whose.land/en/>

36 <https://native-land.ca>

- [Kayak Kids Illustrated History Challenge](#)³⁷ (for Grades 2 to 8).
- Tasha Hubbard’s [short film](#)³⁸ about the context and history of Treaty 6 (Grades 5 and up). Note that this film discusses violence, sexual violence, starvation, and the execution six Cree and two Assiniboine warriors for their role in the North-West Resistance of 1885 and may be triggering for students. Be sure to review ahead of time, warn students of the content involved, allow them to take breaks, and have strategies for supporting students if necessary after the film.
- The National Film Board of Canada’s [Indigenous Cinema](#)³⁹ collection, especially [Trick or Treaty](#)⁴⁰ by Alanis Obomsawin.

Teacher-friendly Resources

- This [resource](#)⁴¹ from the Yellowhead institute interprets a Numbered Treaty and shows the different expectations between settlers and First Nations.
- *Canada’s History* Treaty issue and educational package (Grades 7 and up). Request these resources [here](#).⁴²
- [“Beyond territorial acknowledgments”](#)⁴³ on the âpihtawikosisân blog by Chelsea Vowel.

37 <http://kids.canadashistory.ca/Kids/Contests/Kayak-Illustrated-History-Challenge/Articles/Rules-and-Criteria>

38 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUHnKUaDYjs>

39 https://www.nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema/?amp;film_lang=en&sort=year:desc,title&year=1917..2020

40 https://www.nfb.ca/film/trick_or_treaty/

41 <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/annotated-treaty-factsheet-yellowhead-institute.pdf>

42 <https://www.canadashistory.ca/education/kayak-in-the-classroom/treaties>

43 <https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>

The Indian Act

From the Book

“When Canada became a country in 1867, the government passed a law called the Indian Act. It pushed First Nations peoples off their lands and onto smaller places called reserves. The Indian Act is still around today and First Nations are still working hard to get their territories back! Métis and Inuit people are trying to get their lands back, too” (p. 23).

Note on the word “Indian”

- The word “Indian” is a hurtful term that we should only use when talking about the *Indian Act*. As Falen Johnson, who is Haudenosaunee from Six Nations says about the word, “Just because the government uses outdated racist [words] doesn’t mean you should” (Secret Life of Canada Podcast).

Learning Goals

- As learners, we’re working to be able to:
 - explain what the Indian Act is, how it came to be, and why it was created;
 - explain how it has changed over time and what it looks like today;
 - describe how the Indian Act has hurt First Nations people, children, families, and communities over time, and how it hurts First Nations women;
 - describe how the Indian Act continues to hurt First Nations today;
 - make ethical opinions about the Indian Act (for guidance on developing learning that is connected to the spirit, body, mind, and heart, check out Spirit Bear’s holistic learning diagram at the end of the guide).

Guiding Questions

- What is the Indian Act? How did it come to be?
- Why did the Government of Canada create the Indian Act?
- How did the Indian Act hurt First Nations? In particular, how did it hurt First Nations women?
- How has the Indian Act changed over time? (1951 and 1985 changes are big ones).
- How does it affect First Nations children, families, and societies today?

Lesson and Learning Activity Ideas

• Understand the Impact of the Indian Act (Grades 4 and up)

As a class, engage with [this list by Bob Joseph](#)⁴⁴ explaining 21 ways the Indian Act hurt First Nations (you may wish to adapt it into student-friendly language ahead of time) in a [cooperative jigsaw activity](#).⁴⁵ In partners or small groups, students can investigate one or more items on the list and then present to the class about how their assigned part hurt First Nations. After everyone has shared, and you all have a more thorough understanding of the Indian Act, invite students to demonstrate their understanding of the impact of the Indian Act in a way that works for them (e.g., in a piece of art, journal entry, presentation, etc.). Consider using the following questions as prompts:

- What did you learn about the Indian Act?
- How does learning about the Indian Act make you feel? Why do you think you feel that way?
- What ethical opinions do you have about the Indian Act? Is it fair? Remember to back up your opinion with reasons.

• Focus on Continuity and Change (Grades 5 and up)

Invite students to collaboratively make a class timeline showing how the Indian Act has changed over time. Changes that were made during these years are particularly important: 1876, 1920s, 1950s, 1980s, today. For each significant change, try to answer the following questions:

- Why was this change made?
 - How did it affect First Nations? How did it affect the Government of Canada and settlers?
- Once your class timeline is finished, consider using it as a presentation tool to narrate the story of the Indian Act over time for your school or community. Don't forget to talk about how the Indian Act continues to hurt First Nations today.

⁴⁴ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/21-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-indian-act-1.3533613>

⁴⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dvi0ZvOhZs0>

- **Fighting Back Against the Indian Act (Grades 3 and up)**

It is so important that we understand that First Nations have always resisted rules Canada has made to hurt and control them. With your students, watch [this short video](#)⁴⁶ about the Mary Two-Axe Earley's fight against gender discrimination in the Indian Act which eventually forced the government to amend (change) it in 1985. After watching the video, invite students to address the below questions in a way that works for them.

- How did the Indian Act hurt Mary Two-Axe Earley?
- How did she fight back against the unfairness of the Indian Act?
- What can we learn from Mary Two-Axe Earley's story?

Where to Learn More

Student-friendly Resources

- This [video](#)⁴⁷ by Historica Canada about Mary Two-Axe Earley and her fight to change the Indian Act.

Teacher-friendly Resources

- Mentioned above, Bob Joseph's viral CBC article, [21 things you might not know about the Indian Act](#)⁴⁸ lists the ways it has attacked First Nations.
- This [article on the Indian Act](#)⁴⁹ and how it has changed over time by the University of British Columbia's Indigenous Foundations website.
- This [timeline](#)⁵⁰ by the Native Women's Association of Canada offers a brief timeline of changes to the Indian Act.
- The [Secret Life of Canada's episode on the Indian Act](#)⁵¹ and supporting teacher's guide. Students in Grade 6 and up might also engage with this resource.
- Kim Wheeler's short CBC articles, ["Indian status: 5 things you need to know"](#)⁵² and ["Indian status: 5 more things you need to know."](#)⁵³

46 https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=162&v=0AXc9u5SuRA&feature=emb_title

47 https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=162&v=0AXc9u5SuRA&feature=emb_title

48 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/21-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-indian-act-1.3533613>

49 https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/#abolish

50 <https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The-Indian-Act-Said-WHAT-pdf-1.pdf>

51 <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada/teaching-guide-the-indian-act-1.5290134>

52 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indian-status-5-things-you-need-to-know-1.2744870>

53 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indian-status-5-more-things-you-need-to-know-1.3109451>

Honouring Indigenous Veterans

From the Book

Jake continued, “Something else sad happened to the veterans, Spirit Bear. When the veterans came back from the wars, they got less respect and help from the government than other veterans in Canada. That was unfair. Many years passed before the government started fixing the problem, but there is more to do” (p. 34).

Learning Goals

Words in **bold** are explained in the glossary

As learners, we’re all working to be able to:

- compare **Indigenous** soldiers’ experiences fighting for Canada in World War I and World War II with **white settler** soldiers’ experiences;
- explain how Indigenous soldiers were **discriminated** against by the Government of Canada;
 - make connections to other ways Indigenous soldiers were discriminated against (for example, **residential schools** and the **Indian Act**);
- make ethical opinions about the way Indigenous veterans were treated (for guidance on developing learning that is connected to the spirit, body, mind, and heart, check out Spirit Bear’s holistic learning diagram at the end of the guide);
- explain why it is important to remember Indigenous veterans and the discrimination they experienced.
- find ways to honour Indigenous veterans.

Guiding Questions

- How were Indigenous veterans who fought in World War I and World War II treated by the Government of Canada? Try to make connections to other kinds of discrimination we have learned about (i.e., residential schools, and the Indian Act). How are their experiences different from those of most settler soldiers?
- Why was the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument created? What was it trying to fix?

- Why is it important to remember Indigenous veterans and the discrimination they experienced? Is discrimination against Indigenous people over or is it still happening? How is it still happening?
- How can we honour Indigenous veterans?

Lesson and Learning Activity Ideas

- Adapt this [lesson](#),⁵⁴ by Canada's History magazine inviting students to learn about the contribution of Indigenous soldiers during World War I and draw links to the treaty relationship in a way that works for your class (Grades 5 and up). If your students struggle to make meaning from the written biographies in the lesson, consider swapping the biography with this video.
- Using stations, invite students to explore and then compare the different life experiences of Indigenous, Black, people of colour, and women in World War I and World War II. Explain that often when we honour soldiers, we forget about these groups of people who had different experiences serving Canada than white settler men did. Remind your class that these stations do not include all the different kinds of people who fought in World War I and World War II, but give us an idea of how different groups of people were treated differently in the army and at home.
 - Station 1: The experiences of Indigenous soldiers.
 - > Watch this [heritage minute video](#)⁵⁵ about Tommy Prince, decorated World War II veteran. Then watch [this video](#)⁵⁶ of his son speaking about the discrimination his father faced and that Indigenous peoples continue to face in Canada.
 - > Watch this video about John Shiwak, WWI soldier. Read this [short letter](#)⁵⁷ he wrote to a love interest of his.

54 <https://www.canadashistory.ca/education/lesson-plans/putting-it-into-perspective-first-nations-soldiers-in-the-first-world-war>

55 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RrtGg3KnR4>

56 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEYAaYEeBKM>

57 <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/722588>

- Station 2: The experiences of Black soldiers.
 - > Watch this [video on Canada's Black Battalion](#).⁵⁸ Older learners can read this [article](#)⁵⁹ on the Battalion and/or listen to the embedded podcast.
 - > Watch this video, [Remembering Jeremiah Jones](#).⁶⁰
 - > Read this [article about William A. White](#)⁶¹ (Grades 5 and up).
- Station 3: The experiences of women.
 - > Listen to this [audio recording](#)⁶² of Ida Ferguson's experience.
 - > Look for other resources sharing the experiences of women (including Black, Indigenous, and women of colour).
- Explain that Black, Indigenous, people of colour, and women were denied the rights and opportunities that white settler Canadian men enjoyed before and after the war. For example:
 - During World War I, White and Black women weren't allowed to vote. During World War II, Indigenous women still couldn't vote.
 - During World War I and World War II, Indigenous people weren't allowed to speak their languages, celebrate their cultures, have their own governments, sell things or leave reserves without permission. Learn more [here](#).⁶³
 - During both World Wars, Black children often weren't allowed to go to school with white children. In many places in Canada, Black people weren't allowed to live in neighbourhoods and towns with white people, go to university, work safe and well-paying jobs, and go to many restaurants, theatres, and other businesses. Learn more about racial segregation in Canada [here](#).⁶⁴
- Wrap up the lesson by inviting students to reflect on what they learned, what surprised them, and how discrimination is still a problem in Canada. Discuss how reconciliation is directly related to continued discrimination and that we cannot have reconciliation in Canada until we have equity and justice.

58 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdV6R1chUfU>

59 <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/no-2-construction-battalion>

60 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fyb0qpca_TE

61 <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/william-a-white>

62 <http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories/3128:interview-with-jill-gordon/>

63 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/21-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-indian-act-1.3533613>

64 <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/racial-segregation-of-black-people-in-canada>

- Does your school/learning community celebrate Indigenous Veterans Day (November 8) alongside Remembrance Day? If not, now's the time. Consider inviting your students to share their learning about Indigenous veteran's contributions to Canada's war effort and their unfair treatment by Canada with their school or community. They could write a poem, give a presentation, or prepare a podcast.

Teacher-friendly Resources

- [*Teacher's Guide: Indigenous War Heroes*](#)⁶⁵ by Gerry Weaver and Brian McInnes.
- Greater Victoria School District's Indigenous Education [Remembrance Day Resources](#).⁶⁶
- This CBC [news article](#)⁶⁷ by Jessica Deer shares Aurel Dubé and other Indigenous veterans' difficult experiences of being called to fight against their own people at the Oka Crisis.
- This [Ottawa Citizen article](#)⁶⁸ by Andrew Duffy about Indigenous veteran, Tim O'Loan's healing journey from the trauma of serving in the military.



65 https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/UserFiles/File/Teacher_sGuide.pdf

66 <https://aned.sd61.bc.ca/teacher-resources/remembrance-day-resources/>

67 <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/oka-crisis-veterans-on-both-sides-of-the-barricades>

68 <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/tim-oloans-healing-journey-takes-him-to-the-invictus-games>

The Caring Society's Youth-Centred Reconciliation Campaigns and Events

The Caring Society has been engaging young people in social justice for First Nations young people for many years through accessible campaigns and events. The reconciliation campaigns present additional learning opportunities to the ones listed in this guide. While this guide has presented many ways for students to participate in meaningful change, the Caring Society reconciliation events are easy ways that students can participate year by year.

Reconciliation Campaigns

- [Shannen's Dream](https://fncaringsociety.com/shannens-dream) (fncaringsociety.com/shannens-dream) for safe and comfy schools and quality education.
- [I am a witness](https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness) (fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness) for culturally based equity.
- [Jordan's Principle](https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle) (fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle) to make sure First Nations children get the services they need when they need them.

Reconciliation Events

*[School is a Time for Dreams](#)*⁶⁹

Shannen Koostachin wanted all children to be able to live their dreams. First Nations children do not always get this chance because the Government of Canada underfunds their education. Celebrated during the first few months of the school year, School is a Time for Dreams invites people from all over the country to call for equitable education for First Nations kids.

*[Have a Heart Day](#)*⁷⁰

Celebrated on or around Valentine's Day, Have a Heart Day is a child and youth-led reconciliation event to help make sure First Nations children have a fair chance to grow up safely with their families, get a good education, be healthy, and feel proud of who they are. Take part by sending a Valentine's Card or letter supporting Have a Heart Day to the Prime Minister or your Member or Parliament, or by hosting a party to raise awareness in your school or community!

69 <https://fncaringsociety.com/school-time-dreams>

70 <https://fncaringsociety.com/have-a-heart>

*Bear Witness Day*⁷¹

Show your support and “Bear Witness” to Jordan’s Principle by bringing your bears to daycare, school or work on May 10. Host a Jordan’s Principle “bear birthday party,” parade or other fun event to raise awareness about Jordan’s Principle and to honour Jordan River Anderson!

*Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*⁷²

Celebrated in May and June, Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams is an annual commemoration initiative honouring Residential School Survivors, the children who didn’t make it home, their families and the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



71 <https://fncaringsociety.com/BearWitness>

72 <https://fncaringsociety.com/honouring-memories-planting-dreams>

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