



# ORANGE SHIRT DAY

## Toolkit

2024



FIRST LIGHT

St. John's Friendship Centre



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## INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is designed to assist businesses, organizations, and their employees in Newfoundland and Labrador navigate Orange Shirt Day in a way that respects the Indigenous peoples of our province. As the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation continues to evolve, the information provided may change over time. This version of the toolkit was updated in 2024. Please contact us to be sure you have the most up-to-date version of this document. It is typically updated every year.

Thank you for your interest in participating in Orange Shirt Day!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

We encourage you to connect with your nearest Friendships Centre and Indigenous Governments, as you recognize Orange Shirt Day. This ensures that your learning, fundraising, and other efforts are informed by the communities closest to you.

### FRIENDSHIP CENTRES IN NL

#### ST. JOHN'S:



(709) 726-5902



[firstlightnl.ca](http://firstlightnl.ca)



[info@firstlightnl.ca](mailto:info@firstlightnl.ca)

#### STEPHENVILLE:



(709) 643-3902



[pdifc.com](http://pdifc.com)

#### HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY:















(709) 896-8302



[lfchvgb.ca](http://lfchvgb.ca)

## INDIGENOUS GROUPS & GOVERNMENTS IN NL

| Name                          | Location<br>(main office) | Contact Information   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| <b>FIRST NATIONS</b>          |                           |   |
| Flat Bay Band, Inc.           | Flat Bay                  |  (709) 647-1370<br> <a href="http://flatbayband.ca">flatbayband.ca</a>  |
| Innu Nation                   | Sheshatshiu & Natuashish  |  Sheshatshiu:<br>(709) 497-8398<br> Natuashish:<br>(709) 497-8398<br> <a href="http://innu.ca">innu.ca</a> |
| Miawpukek First Nation        | Conne River               |  (709) 882-2470<br> <a href="http://mfngov.ca">mfngov.ca</a>   |
| Qalipu First Nation           | Corner Brook              |  (709) 634-0996<br> <a href="http://qalipu.ca">qalipu.ca</a>  |
| <b>INUIT</b>                  |                           |   |
| Nunatsiavut Government        | Nain                      |  (709) 922-2942<br> <a href="http://nunatsiavut.com">nunatsiavut.com</a>  |
| NunatuKavut Community Council | Happy Valley - Goose Bay  |  (709) 896-0592<br> <a href="http://nunatukavut.ca">nunatukavut.ca</a>  |

## WHAT IS ORANGE SHIRT DAY?

In 1973, Phyllis Webstad, a member of the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation in British Columbia, was given a bright orange shirt by her grandmother to wear to school. However, when she arrived at the Mission school, the orange shirt that she loved was confiscated and she never saw it again.

At the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) Residential School Commemoration Project and Reunion in 2013, her story inspired the adoption of the orange shirt as a symbol for raising awareness about impact of residential schools, alongside the message "Every Child Matters." Webstad is one of the founders of the Orange Shirt Society, a non-profit organization that supports reconciliation and creates awareness about the intergenerational impact on Indigenous people caused by the residential school system on Indigenous people. (Orange Shirt Society, (n.d.))

*"The color 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."*

*-Phyllis Webstad*

On September 30th each year, we wear orange to honour the children who survived the Residential School system and those who did not make it home. The day is also an opportunity for non-Indigenous people to learn about the Indigenous people in this province, the legacy of Residential Schools, and how to actively participate in reconciliation.

## NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

As a gesture of reconciliation, the Government of Canada recognized September 30th 2021 as the first annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Orange Shirt Day). This day is now a federal statutory holiday to honour those impacted by residential schools.

In 2022, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador also declared September 30th as a Day for Truth and Reconciliation. While Government offices, schools, and other entities have chosen to close this year we encourage you to do what you feel is appropriate for your business or organization, keeping in mind the significance of the day.

We hope that this toolkit will be helpful in guiding your actions on September 30th, and encourage you to share your activities with other businesses and organizations so that they may be inspired to take part as well.






## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Like the rest of Canada, residential schools operated in this province. The schools were run by the International Grenfell Association and the Moravian Mission with the goal of assimilating Inuit and Innu children.

Children were forcibly separated from their families and forbidden to acknowledge their Indigenous culture or speak their own languages. As a result, survivors and their families continue to experience intergenerational trauma.

Although some Innu children attended residential schools, most attended day schools run by the Roman Catholic Church in Sheshatshiu and Davis Inlet. Although these were not residential schools, the students shared the same experience of abuse, assimilation and cultural genocide (Procter, 2020). There were five residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador (Government of Canada, 2019):



-  **Nain Boarding School**  
Nain, Nunatsiavut, Labrador  
**Closed in 1973**
-  **Makkovik Boarding School**  
Makkovik, Nunatsiavut, Labrador  
**Closed in 1960**
-  **Yale School**  
North West River, Nunatukavut, Labrador  
**Closed in 1980**
-  **Lockwood School**  
Cartright, Nunatukavut, Labrador  
**Closed in 1964**
-  **St. Anthony Orphanage and Boarding School**  
St. Anthony, Newfoundland  
**Closed in 1979**

## WHAT CAN I DO?

### 1 WEAR ORANGE

First Light encourages everyone to wear orange shirts on September 30 to demonstrate support for the Indigenous community, and a personal commitment to reconciliation.



First Light offers orange t-shirts on [our website](#) at the cost of \$20 each. Proceeds will be used to build a Residential School Memorial Garden at our headquarters, located at 40 Quidi Vidi Road. Bulk orders may be available. Please check our website for more details.



Beware of sellers who may be profiting from the cause - i.e. not donating profits to Indigenous organizations, stealing designs, etc. Choose a seller that is either an Indigenous non-profit organization, an Indigenous business, or a business donating a portion of profits from their Orange Shirt Day items to an Indigenous non-profit organization. Purchasing and wearing orange shirts should be meaningful.

### Can't wear a shirt to work? (Uniforms, etc.)

If staff are not able to wear personal clothing, there are other options to show support: pins, stickers, etc. may be available. Please check our [website](#) for more details, or look around your home to see what you already have!

### 2 EDUCATE YOURSELF

Learning about what happened at residential schools, and how it affects Indigenous people to this day can come from a variety of resources. First Light offers [Cultural Diversity Training](#), which discusses the Indigenous groups here in Newfoundland and Labrador, residential schools, cultural appropriation, racism and more. Encourage your employer to schedule a training session for staff, or check out the next available public session.

At the end of this toolkit, you will find a list of resources to help educate yourself, no matter where you may be on your learning journey.



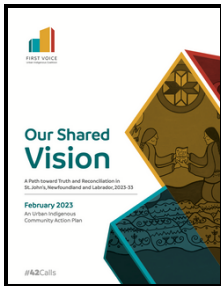
### 3 AMPLIFY URBAN INDIGENOUS VOICES



FIRST VOICE  
Urban Indigenous Coalition

Launched in 2019 by First Light, First Voice is a coalition of Indigenous Peoples, service providers, and all levels of government working together to advance truth and reconciliation in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

We envision a world where the inherent rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador are respectfully recognized and actively supported by all. Our name reflected the self-determining principle that meaningful action on urban Indigenous issues requires prioritizing the values, perspectives, and lived experiences of First Peoples.



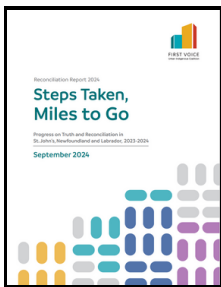
#### OUR SHARED VISION

Informed by more than 3 years of sustained community engagements. Our Shared Vision describes an ambitious ten-year plan to advance truth and reconciliation in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The plan's **42 Calls for Change** – all inspired by the TRC, MMIWG, and UNDRIP – outline a variety of ways that residents in St. John's and across the province can work alongside diverse urban Indigenous Peoples to address the ongoing legacy of colonialism.

Find it [here](#).



Find a pocket-size version of the Calls For Change [here](#).



#### STEPS TAKEN, MILES TO GO **COMING SOON**

Provides an update on the state of truth and reconciliation in St. John's. It gives updates on each of the 42 Calls for Change and identifies overall trends in truth and reconciliation 18 months after Our Shared Vision was published.

Once published, find it [here](#).

### ADVANCING CALLS FOR CHANGE

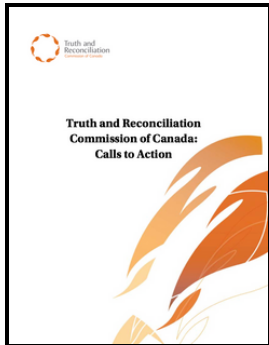
First Voice facilitates **Action Circles** to advance work on specific Calls for Change in both Health & Justice.

Want to get involved? Learn more [here](#).



## 4 READ NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL CALLS

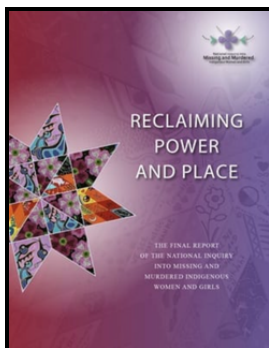
Familiarizing yourself with these calls provides further perspective on the common challenges Indigenous Peoples face across Canada and around the world. The following documents shaped the local Recommendations and Calls for Change by First Voice (see page 6):



### Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

To advance Reconciliation in Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action. Like *Our Shared Vision*, these calls cover a variety of areas.

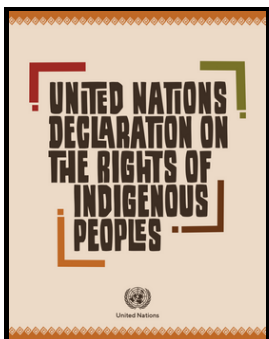
[READ IT HERE](#)



### Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

Canada's MMIWG National Inquiry identified 231 Calls for Justice to address the persistent human rights violations that are at the root of high rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA individuals.

[READ IT HERE](#)



### United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

UNDRIP outlines the collective and individual rights of Indigenous Peoples around the world. The international declaration codifies the right to self-determination, cultural preservation, land ownership, and protection against discrimination and human rights abuses.

[READ IT HERE](#)

Do you have connections to decision makers in government or influential businesses who can create change? What can you do in your work and your daily life to advance these recommendations?

## 5 DONATE

There are a few options for donating to First Light:



### ONLINE

#### [CLICK HERE](#)

Don't have PayPal? No problem!

Choose [Donate with Debit or Credit Card](#) to use a card.



### CHEQUE

Cheques can be made out to "**First Light**" and mailed to:

40 Quidi Vidi Road  
St. John's, NL  
A1A 1C1

*Cash or Cheque donations can also be delivered in-person to:*

*70 Brookfield Road  
St. John's, NL  
A1E 3T9*

## Tax Receipts

If you require a tax receipt, please email [info@firstlightnl.ca](mailto:info@firstlightnl.ca) with the details of your donation: date, amount, name as it needs to appear on receipt, etc.

Please allow a few days for processing.



## COMMUNITY CUPBOARDS

At **70 Brookfield Road**, First Light accepts donations of the following:

- toiletries

At **42 Bannerman Street**, First Light accepts donations of the following:

- toiletries
- non-perishable food

Staff availability to accept donations can vary, so please email [info@firstlightnl.ca](mailto:info@firstlightnl.ca) or call (709) 726-5902 to arrange a date/time for drop-off.

## Do you sell products? Get creative!

Like other initiatives, anything can be themed with a colour to raise awareness! Depending on what product(s) your business sells, you could choose an item that is orange to raise money. Marketing in advance is recommended, so customers know to choose your business on that day. Some ideas include cupcakes or doughnuts, floral bouquets, jewelry, etc.



## 6 USE YOUR PLATFORM

Showing your target audience and customers that you care about Orange Shirt Day not only contributes to awareness online, but it also shows that your business is socially responsible! Don't wait until Orange Shirt Day to begin posting. Share what your business/ organization plans to do in recognition of Orange Shirt Day that week. Don't forget to share photos of staff wearing their orange shirts!

### #whyiwearorange

Be sure to use the hashtag #whyiwearorange so that people browsing can find your posts; increasing your reach.

### #42calls

Promote calls for change in areas you have influence. Harness this hashtag to challenge decision makers, showcase your actions, and inspire others!

We would love to see your posts! Tag us:



@FirstLightNL



@FirstVoiceNL



@FirstLight\_NL



@FirstVoiceNL



@firstlightnl



@FirstVoiceNL



@firstlight\_nl

Need some inspiration for Orange Shirt Day content? See the templates provided in the Resources section of this toolkit.

## WHAT SHOULD WE AVOID?

The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation commemorates the attempted destruction of Indigenous Cultures in the residential school system. It should be approached as a day of solemn reflection and an opportunity for allies to show solidarity.

Keep this context in mind when considering the following:



### **Lowering of flags**

*This colonial tradition is not meaningful in the case of residential schools.*



### **Treating Orange Shirt Day as a celebration**

*Treat it as a day of reflection and learning.*



### **Expectation of having an Indigenous person read a Land Acknowledgement**

*Anyone can read a Land Acknowledgement! Learn more [HERE](#).*

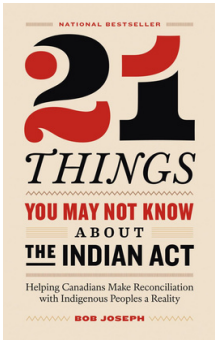


### **Expectation of an Indigenous person willing to share their culture or experiences**

*Do not impose any expectation that Indigenous people perform, wear traditional regalia or other traditional clothing, or share sacred teachings.*

# RESOURCES

## Books (Adults)



### **21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act**

**Bob Joseph**

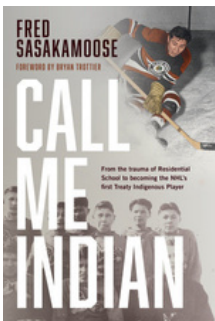
The essential guide to understanding the legal document and its repercussion on generations of Indigenous Peoples, written by a leading cultural sensitivity trainer. Since its creation in 1876, the Indian Act has shaped, controlled, and constrained the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Peoples, and is at the root of many enduring stereotypes. Bob Joseph's book comes at a key time in the reconciliation process, when awareness from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities is at a crescendo.



### **A Long Journey: Residential Schools in Labrador & Newfoundland**

**Andrea Procter**

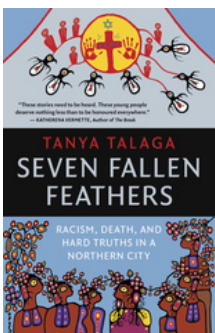
For years, the story of residential schools has been told by the authorities who ran them. A Long Journey helps redress this imbalance by listening closely to the accounts of former students, as well as drawing extensively on government, community, and school archives. The book examines the history of boarding schools in Labrador and St. Anthony, and, in doing so, contextualizes the ongoing determination of Indigenous communities to regain control over their children's education.



### **Call Me Indian**

**Fred Sasakamoose**

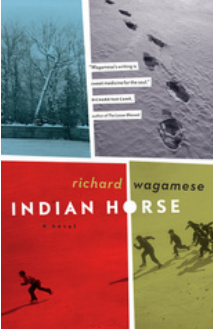
Fred Sasakamoose, torn from his home at the age of seven, endured the horrors of residential school for a decade before becoming one of 120 players in the most elite hockey league in the world. He has been heralded as the first Indigenous player with Treaty status in the NHL, making his official debut as a 1954 Chicago Black Hawks player on Hockey Night in Canada and teaching Foster Hewitt how to pronounce his name. Sasakamoose played against such legends as Gordie Howe, Jean Beliveau, and Maurice Richard. After twelve games, he returned home.



### **Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City**

**Tanya Talaga**

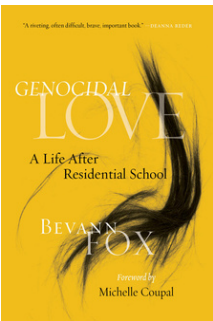
Over the span of eleven years, seven Indigenous high school students died in Thunder Bay, Ontario. They were hundreds of kilometres away from their families, forced to leave home because there was no adequate high school on their reserves. Five were found dead in the rivers surrounding Lake Superior, below a sacred Indigenous site. Using a sweeping narrative focusing on the lives of the students, award-winning author Tanya Talaga delves into the history of this northern city that has come to manifest Canada's long struggle with human rights violations against Indigenous communities.



### Indian Horse

**Richard Wagamese**

Saul Indian Horse has hit bottom. His last binge almost killed him, and now he's a reluctant resident in a treatment centre for alcoholics, surrounded by people he's sure will never understand him. But Saul wants peace, and he grudgingly comes to see that he'll find it only through telling his story. With him, readers embark on a journey back through the life he's led as a northern Ojibway, with all its joys and sorrows.



### Genocidal Love: A Life After Residential School

**Bevann Fox**

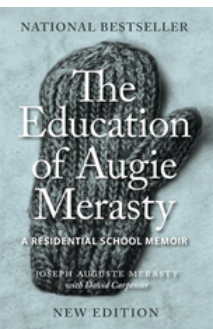
Presenting herself as "Myrtle," residential school survivor and Indigenous television personality Bevann Fox explores essential questions by recounting her life through fiction. She shares memories of an early childhood filled with love with her grandparents—until she is sent to residential school at the age of seven. Her horrific experiences of abuse there left her without a voice, timid and nervous, never sure, never trusting, affecting her romantic relationships and family bonds for years to come.



### Five Little Indians: A Novel

**Michelle Good**

Taken from their families when they are very small and sent to a remote, church-run residential school, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie are barely out of childhood when they are finally released after years of detention. Alone and without any skills, support or families, the teens find their way to the seedy and foreign world of Downtown Eastside Vancouver, where they cling together, striving to find a place of safety and belonging in a world that doesn't want them. The paths of the five friends cross and crisscross over the decades as they struggle to overcome, or at least forget, the trauma they endured during their years at the Mission.



### The Education of Augie Merasty

**Joseph Auguste Merasty**

A courageous and intimate memoir, *The Education of Augie Merasty* is the story of a child who faced the dark heart of humanity, let loose by the cruel policies of a bigoted nation.

A retired fisherman and trapper who sometimes lived rough on the streets, Augie Merasty was one of an estimated 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children who were taken from their families and sent to government-funded, church-run schools, where they were subjected to a policy of aggressive assimilation.

### Books (Children & Youth)

We recommend reviewing any resource before introducing it to children. While the topic of residential schools is extremely important, it can be a very difficult to navigate. It's important to make sure any videos, stories etc. shared with them are appropriate. If you'd like additional kinds of resources for children, you can find them here: <https://orangeshirtday.org/reconciliation-hub/>

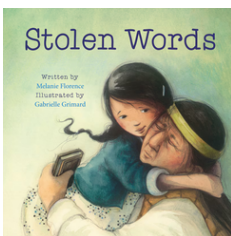
*Age recommendations from Indigo.ca*



#### **My Heart Fills With Happiness** 0-2 Years

**Monique Gray Smith**

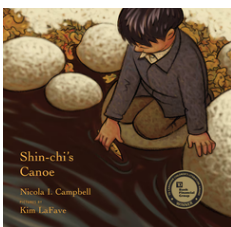
The sun on your face. The smell of warm bannock baking in the oven. Holding the hand of someone you love. What fills your heart with happiness? This beautiful board book, with illustrations from celebrated artist Julie Flett, serves as a reminder for little ones and adults alike to reflect on and cherish the moments in life that bring us joy.



#### **Stolen Words** 6-8 Years

**Melanie Florence**

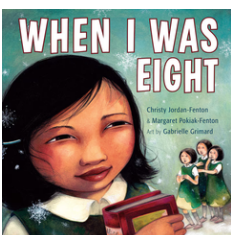
The story of the beautiful relationship between a little girl and her grandfather. When she asks her grandfather how to say something in his language – Cree – he admits that his language was stolen from him when he was a boy. The little girl then sets out to help her grandfather find his language again. This sensitive and warmly illustrated picture book explores the intergenerational impact of the residential school system that separated young Indigenous children from their families. The story recognizes the pain of those whose culture and language were taken from them, how that pain is passed down, and how healing can also be shared.



#### **Shin-chi's Canoe** 6-8 Years

**Nicola Campbell**

As they begin their journey in the back of a cattle truck, Shi-shi-etko tells her brother all the things he must remember: the trees, the mountains, the rivers and the salmon. Shin-chi knows he won't see his family again until the sockeye salmon return in the summertime. When they arrive at school, Shi-shi-etko gives him a tiny cedar canoe, a gift from their father. The children's time is filled with going to mass, school for half the day, and work the other half. The girls cook, clean and sew, while the boys work in the fields, in the woodshop and at the forge. Shin-chi is forever hungry and lonely, but, finally, the salmon swim up the river and the children return home for a joyful family reunion.



#### **When I Was Eight** 6-8 Years

**Christy Jordan-Fenton, Margaret-olemaun Pokiak-fenton**

Olemaun is eight and knows a lot of things. But she does not know how to read. Ignoring her father's warnings, she travels far from her Arctic home to the outsiders' school to learn. The nuns at the school call her Margaret. They cut off her long hair and force her to do menial chores, but she remains undaunted. Her tenacity draws the attention of a black-cloaked nun who tries to break her spirit at every turn. But the young girl is more determined than ever to learn how to read.

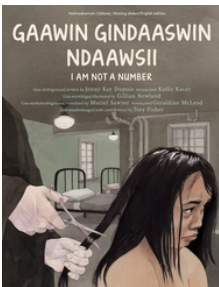


## **When We Were Alone** 6-8 Years

**David A. Robertson**

A young girl notices things about her grandmother that make her curious. Why does her grandmother have long, braided hair and beautifully coloured clothing? Why does she speak Cree and spend so much time with her family? As the girl asks questions, her grandmother shares her experiences in a residential school, when all of these things were taken away.

Portage & Main Press' Free Parent/Teacher Guide [HERE](#).



## **I Am Not A Number** 9-12 Years

**Jenny Kay Dupuis, Kathy Kacer**

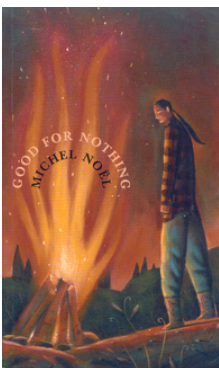
When eight-year-old Irene is removed from her First Nations family to live in a residential school she is confused, frightened, and terribly homesick. She tries to remember who she is and where she came from, despite the efforts of the nuns who are in charge at the school and who tell her that she is not to use her own name but instead use the number they have assigned to her. When she goes home for summer holidays, Irene's parents decide never to send her and her brothers away again. But where will they hide? And what will happen when her parents disobey the law?



## **A Stranger at Home: A True Story** 9-12 Years

**Christy Jordan-Fenton, Margaret-olemaun Pokiak-fenton**

Traveling to be reunited with her family in the arctic, 10-year-old Margaret Pokiak can hardly contain her excitement. It's been two years since her parents delivered her to the school run by the dark-cloaked nuns and brothers. Coming ashore, Margaret spots her family, but her mother barely recognizes her, screaming, "Not my girl." Margaret realizes she is now marked as an outsider. And Margaret is an outsider: she has forgotten the language and stories of her people, and she can't even stomach the food her mother prepares. However, Margaret gradually relearns her language and her family's way of living. Along the way, she discovers how important it is to remain true to the ways of her people—and to herself.



## **Good For Nothing** 13 Years and older

**Michel Noel**

The year is 1959, and fifteen-year-old Nipishish returns to his reserve in northern Quebec after being kicked out of residential school, where the principal tells him he's a good-for-nothing who, like all Indians, can look forward to a life of drunkenness, prison and despair. The reserve, however, offers nothing to Nipishish. He remembers little of his late mother and father. In fact, he seems to know less about himself than the people at the band office. He must try to rediscover the old ways, face the officials who find him a threat, and learn the truth about his father's death.



## Websites

**First Light - Orange Shirt Day**

<https://firstlightnl.ca/resources/orange-shirt-day/>

**First Voice - Calls for Change**

<https://firstvoicenl.ca/calls-for-change/>

**The Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s 94 Calls to Action**

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenouspeople/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls\\_to\\_action\\_english2.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenouspeople/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf)

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)**

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

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**

[https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

**The Orange Shirt Society - Resources and Ideas**

<https://orangeshirtday.org/reconciliation-hub/resources/>

**Indigenous Corporate Training's FREE eBooks**

<https://www.ictinc.ca/free-ebooks>

**Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion - Orange Shirt Day/National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

<https://ccdi.ca/media/3026/20210922-orange-shirt-and-truth-and-reconciliation-day-resources-en.pdf>

**Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business: Business Reconciliation in Canada Guidebook**

[https://www.ccab.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Business-reconciliation-in-canada\\_WEB-final\\_AA.pdf](https://www.ccab.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Business-reconciliation-in-canada_WEB-final_AA.pdf)

**Manitoba Harm Reduction Network: Application + Action - TRC Reading Guide for Non-Indigenous Organizations**

<https://www.kanikanichihk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2018-MRHN-TRCGUIDE-FINAL-WEB.pdf>

**CBC's Beyond 94**

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

**The Orange Path: Resources for Learning**

<https://www.orangepath.ca>

## Audio/Video

**Legacy of Hope Foundation: Residential School Survivor Stories**

<https://legacyofhope.ca/wherearethechildren/stories/>



**Orange Shirt Society's Youtube Channel**

**Stolen Children | Residential School survivors speak out** CBC News: The National

**What is reconciliation? Indigenous educators have their say** TVO Docs

**What non-Indigenous Canadians need to know** TVO Docs

**Is it really genocide? In Canada?** TVO Docs

**Residential Schools Podcast Series** Historica Canada

## Social Media Templates

There is no obligation to use these templates, however, feel free to use them if you wish! Access all of the templates [here](#).

*We're wearing orange today because...*

Put your  
photo here!

*We're wearing orange  
today because...*



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