



REMEMBER

- The words Aboriginal or Indigenous are all-encompassing terms that include First Nations, Metis and Inuit. "Indigenous" is the term of choice for the government of Canada, the best idea is to ask what title they and their family uses to define themselves.
- Indigenous peoples have distinct and unique cultures, there are approximately 634 Nations with over 70 distinct languages. Though there are similarities, geography strongly impacts different expressions of culture.
- Knowing the historical story is crucial to understanding the present and ongoing impact of Indigenous people.
- Spirituality and Indigenous knowledge is woven into daily life for many Indigenous peoples. Both can often be seen in the form of ceremonies, song, dance, clothing, stories, art, connection to the earth and so much more.
- Humour is often a way Indigenous people interact. Practice participating in humour within the context of relationship being careful not to assume it's acceptable in every context.



RECOGNIZE

- Canada has a dark, tumultuous history with Indigenous peoples. This has created a wound that is still slowly being recognized today. Colonization and epidemics almost decimated many first nations and left Indigenous peoples without their land, culture, and their rights.
- Without consent or consultation from Indigenous peoples, the government created and imposed treaties, policies, and laws like the Indian Act. These same laws still affect their access to basic rights today.
- In an attempt to assimilate Indigenous people into white culture, beliefs, and ideologies, Indigenous children were forcibly taken from their homes and families and placed in residential schools. Abuse and neglect were common and roughly 3000 - 6000 children died. With current discoveries of unmarked graves this number continues to rise.
- The historical trauma and loss that these tragedies brought still affects Indigenous survivors and families today.
- Despite past horrors and current struggles, Indigenous peoples are resilient, have overcome many hardships and continue to fight for change today.



RESPOND

- **Do your homework.** Educate yourself on the history of Indigenous and Settler history of what is now called Canada. Listen and reflect.
- **Advocate for understanding.** Not having a full or true picture about the Indigenous story in Canada causes people to miss the huge impact of the injustices suffered. You can make a difference by sharing what you are learning, encouraging a wider understanding in the Church, community, and the culture at large.
- **Speak up.** Microaggressions are casual comments, questions and actions that intentionally or unintentionally reinforce derogatory ideas or negative attitudes toward a marginalized group. Don't let these slide by unexamined in your conversation but instead respond with: "I wonder where that thought came from."
- **Join in.** If invited, attend Indigenous events with your children, friends, and community. Many are open to the public and are a way for you to continually be learning.
- **Be aware.** Don't appropriate (take for your purposes) culture, traditions, or art. It is very disrespectful for non-Indigenous people to do dances, carving, or the running of ceremonies, especially because these things aren't meant to stand outside of the context of community. An example of appropriation is when people dress up in Indigenous regalia as a Halloween costume.
- **Be an ally.** Choose to support structures, services and initiatives by Indigenous people for Indigenous people. Partner through advocating, volunteering or donating to things such as Indigenous social services, foundations, and non-profit organizations.
- **Build relationships for the right reasons.** Friendship is not about fixing - it's about simply wanting to be with the person. Seek to be humble and open as you get to know about the Indigenous story and let that understanding guide you as you pursue authentic relationships.



Understanding INDIGENOUS HISTORY



RESOURCES

For links to further resources, tools, and info for this topic, scan the QR code or visit

resourcesjsl.org



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