



THE INAUGURAL NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

EXPLORING WHAT THIS MEANS FOR RECONCILIATION IN CANADA

Discussion Guide

About the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

In June, the federal government announced the creation of a new statutory holiday known as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to be recognized on September 30 each year. This day fulfills the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call-to-Action #80 and will serve as a day of education, remembrance, reflection, and action. Since 2013, September 30 has been known as Orange Shirt Day, a day to recognize the tragic history and long-standing effects of residential schools in Canada.

Call-to-Action #80

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

About September 30: The Inaugural National Day for Truth and Reconciliation; Exploring what this means for reconciliation in Canada.

In anticipation of the newly established federal holiday, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, many people in Canada have been wondering what this day means. Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund (DWF)'s President and CEO, Sarah Midanik, hosted a panel discussion to explore this new day of reflection, the significance of September 30, what this means for reconciliation in Canada, and how we can participate meaningfully.

The discussion included notable speakers:

- Bob Watts, Former Interim Executive Director of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission
- Harriet Visitor, Chanie Wenjack's Niece and DWF Board Member
- Blair Cunningham, Orange Shirt Society Board Member
- Hillory Tenute, Interim Executive Director, Canadian Roots Exchange

Discussion Questions

As you view the panel discussion with your classroom, colleagues, friends, family or others, we encourage you to use these questions to lead a discussion about the inaugural day and what you think it means for reconciliation in Canada.

1. The federal government announced the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a federal statutory holiday; however, not all communities, businesses, organizations, and schools can recognize the day in the same way. Some will recognize this day as a paid holiday/day off, others will not.

How does this impact the way we honour the intention of this day? What do you think is the best way for all peoples in Canada to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation?

2. The panelists discuss the importance of *recognizing* and *reflecting* on September 30 rather than *celebrating*. Why do you think this is an important distinction to make?
3. Why do you think the federal government choose September 30? Will this impact the progress of the Orange Shirt Day movement?
4. The discovery of the remains of Indigenous children at a former residential site in Kamloops, BC and subsequent discoveries throughout Canada sparked the 'Cancel Canada Day' movement. How do you think the creation of this holiday will impact the way we celebrate Canada Day in the future? How do you think this will impact our national identity?
5. What other Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action can communities/businesses/organizations answer or initiate to further reconciliation? What can be done as an individual to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action?
6. What should non-Indigenous people in Canada do to commemorate this day?

Additional resources can be found at:

canadianroots.ca

NCTR.ca

orangeshirtday.org