

So you've just done a Blanket Exercise and you're a teacher... : 10 Calls to Action for Teachers

In reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action

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#1: Have Your Class Write Letters

Teaching engaged citizenship means teaching advocacy. We are called as Canadians, young and old, to advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples by lobbying our church leaders, public institutions, and municipal, provincial and federal governments. This can include but is not limited to:

- Jordan's Principle** (TRC #3) and **Shannen's Dream** (TRC #8): Consult the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada's website for educational resources on these initiatives. Colour the Jordan's bear and Shannen's dream colouring sheets and mail them to your MP. On Valentine's Day, participate in the Have a Heart campaign. Print off the Valentine's letter from the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society website and mail to your elected representative.
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** (TRC #80): Write a letter asking for the creation of a new statutory holiday, a National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.

#2: Teach your students about residential school

Read the following books to your students:

- Shin-chi's Canoe*** by Nicola Campbell
 - Kookum's Red Shoes*** by Peter Eyvindson
 - As long as the Rivers Flow*** by Larry Loyie
 - Fatty Legs: A True Story*** by C. Jordan-Fenton & M. Pokiak-Fenton
 - When We Were Alone*** by David Robertson
 - Amik Loves School: A story of wisdom*** by Katherena Vermette
 - I Am Not A Number*** by Jenny Dupuis and Kathy Kacer
 - Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story*** by David A. Robertson
- Make age-appropriate curriculum available to Kindergarten to Grade 12 students (TRC #62i).

#3: Learn an Indigenous Language as a Class

Follow the lead of Regina teacher, Aaron Warner, who embarked on 100 days of learning Cree with his Gr. 7/8 students. Label objects in your classroom in a local Indigenous language. Demonstrate to your students that Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and that there is an urgency to preserve them (TRC #14i).

#4: Help Organize a Ceremony at your School

In collaboration with local Indigenous organizations, host a Round Dance, raise a tipi, plan a Heart Garden ceremony... Plan fieldtrips to attend local Pow-Wows and National Aboriginal Day celebrations. Build your students' capacity for empathy, intercultural understanding, and mutual respect (TRC #63iii).

#5: Learn about the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, and reject these concepts

In your classroom, teach about European exploration. Clearly explain and repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* (TRC #46ii).

#6: Collaborate with Indigenous colleagues

Find ways to work together to renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility at your school (TRC #45iii).

#7: Raise money to protect and commemorate a local residential school cemetery

Follow the example of the George Lee School in Regina, SK who worked with the Regina Indian Industrial School Commemorative Association to raise money to begin preserving and protecting the residential school cemetery. Learn about the history of residential schools as you raise money to protect and commemorate a residential school cemetery near you (TRC #75).

#8: Adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in your Classroom

Download the youth-friendly version of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)* from the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society's website. Use UNDRIP as a reconciliation framework and apply its principles, norms and standards to your classroom (TRC #92).

#9: Attend a Treaty Gathering as a Class

Find out about how your Treaty is celebrated annually, if applicable. Plan to attend. Read your Treaty with your students. Learn about your Treaty rights and responsibilities. Teach your students how to respect and honour Treaty relationships (TRC #10vii).

#10: Organize a Blanket Exercise for your School Staff

Teachers are called to pursue training so that they can develop and implement Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum and learning resources related to Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and the history and legacy of residential schools (TRC #63).

"It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation." –Justice Murray Sinclair