

# So you've just done a Blanket Exercise...

## 10 Calls to Action for Individual Canadians

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

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### #1: Write a Letter

Individual Canadians are called to advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples by lobbying their church leaders, public institutions, and municipal, provincial and federal governments. This can include but is not limited to issues such as:

- Jordan's Principle** (TRC #3): Call for all First Nations children to be able to access public services ordinarily available to other Canadian children without experiencing any service denials, delays or disruptions related to their First Nations status.
- Shannen's Dream** (TRC #8): Call for equitable funding for education of Indigenous children. All children should be able to attend safe and comfy schools.
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** (TRC #80): Call for the establishment of a statutory holiday, a National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.
- Catholic Church Apology** (TRC #58): Call on the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.

### #2: Support the work of local Indigenous organizations

Volunteer and donate to local Indigenous organizations. Work collaboratively to advance reconciliation (TRC#46). Follow the lead of the Aboriginal community (TRC # 76i). This work may include the following specific projects:

- Healing Centres** (TRC #21): Provide funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres.
- Residential School Cemeteries** (TRC #75): Raise money to protect and commemorate school cemeteries.

### #3: Make some Indigenous friends

Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationship into the future (TRC #45iii).

### #4: Participate in Ceremonies and Demonstrations

Many Indigenous community organizations host ceremonies and events that are open to everyone. Participate in a Round Dance, attend a Pow-Wow, eat some bannock at a feast, go to a Sweat Lodge, attend an Idle No More rally... Build your own intercultural understanding (TRC #63iii).

### #5: Attend a Treaty Gathering

Find out when the Treaty in your area was signed, if applicable. See if they host annual gatherings and plan to attend. Read your Treaty to find out about your Treaty rights and responsibilities. Respect and honour Treaty relationships (TRC #10vii).

### #6: Organize a Blanket Exercise for your church

Congregations are called to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that they learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary (TRC #59).

### #7: Teach your children about residential school

Read the following books to your children and your children's children: *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 Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, and *When We Were Alone* by David Robertson. Make age-appropriate curriculum available to Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. (TRC #62i)

### #8: Read and adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

Use the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and apply its principles, norms and standards to your own work and private life. Make sure Indigenous people have equitable access to jobs in your field (TRC #92).

### #9: Work to learn an Indigenous language

Understand that Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them (TRC #14i).

### #10: Learn about the land you are on

Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius (TRC #46). Advocate for the reform of those laws, government policies and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts (TRC #70). Find out which nation occupied the land that you are on. If it is now yours, how did the land come to be yours? Think about reconciliation through the lens of land ownership. What might reconciliation look like with land in mind?

### Additional Resources:

- Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)
- Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada by Chelsea Vowel (2016)
- Children of the Broken Treaty: Canada's Lost Promise and One Girl's Dream by Charlie Angus (2015)
- Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call by Arthur Manuel (2015)

