

OPTION 4: Using Free Promotional Materials for National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (May 26) or National Aboriginal Day (June 21)

May 26: Call 780-447-9342 or see www.ndhr.ca before April 30 for an order form for a colouring and information sheet “Hands for Healing and Reconciliation.” You may also request “dog tags” as a “previous item” (2007 product).

Discuss the kinds of divisions there are in the world, in the community, and in families. How can we use dialogue to grow in understanding? Give a pair of “dog tags” to each youth and reflect with them on the need for people to learn about each other’s differences if we are to grow in acceptance and understanding. Invite them to give one “dog tag” to someone with whom they would like to reconcile. They can keep the other as a reminder that healing and understanding takes the effort of two people or groups.

June 21: Call 1-800-567-9601 or see www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nad/pdc-eng.asp in April to order fast fact crunchers, tattoos, a learning activity guide, a poster, and more. Some resources can also be downloaded.

Also see *The Children of The Dancing Sun* curriculum for more suggestions: www.united-church.ca/exploring/curriculum/dancingsun_children

Music with Children

VU 229	God of the Sparrow
VU 265	Creating God, Your Fingers Trace
VU 269	The Care the Eagle Gives Her Young
VU 270	Dear Mother God
MV 92	Like a Rock
MV 149	Peace for the Children (possibly learn the word for “peace” in a local Native language)
MV 214	May God’s Sheltering Wings



Toward Truth and Reconciliation
With the Children



For use between May 25 and June 22, or in October 2008.

Part of a worship service marking

- 10 years since the United Church apologized to former students of United Church residential schools, their families, and their communities
- the beginning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

See www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools/resources/trservice for the full service and related links.

Key dates:

- May 26: National Day of Healing and Reconciliation
- June 21: National Aboriginal Day of Prayer
- October 27, 1998: United Church apology to former students of United Church residential schools, their families, and their communities

OPTION 1: “Far from Home” from *The Painted Trunk and Other Stories* (United Church Publishing House, 1999)

Read the story about children attending residential school (or invite a survivor to tell his/her story). Ask the children “wondering questions.” For example: I wonder how the little girl felt. I wonder how her parents felt. I wonder what the most important part of this story is. I wonder what part of this story is about you or where you are in the story. I wonder if you have ever done anything that hurt someone else. I wonder how it feels to have someone apologize when they have hurt you. Conclude with the possibility of giving or applying to the United Church Healing Fund.



The Painted Trunk is available from United Church Resource Distribution (www.united-church.ca/sales/ucrd).

Please copy and fold — for Sunday School teachers, worship leaders, or parents

OPTION 2: How to Apologize

Prepare ahead: On a flipchart or overhead screen list the six parts of an effective apology.*

"I am sorry."	Expressing regret, remorse
"I was wrong."	Accepting responsibility
"I am aware of how I hurt you."	Realizing the impact
"What can I do to make it right?"	Making restitution, reparation
"I'll try not to do that again."	Genuinely repenting, committing to change behaviour
"Will you please forgive me?"	Requesting forgiveness and indicating that you want to see relationship fully restored

Say to the children: Imagine that you have done something that has hurt someone else, and it is hard to be friends like you were. You can choose if you want to tell the truth, apologize, and try to be friends again.

Present "what if" scenarios: What if you accidentally bumped into someone and they fell down. What should you do? What if you got mad at a friend and said something really mean to them. What should you do?

Invite the children to name some different ways to apologize. See if the children can come up with statements and actions similar to the six parts to an apology that you've listed.

Have the children help you construct an example: I am sorry that I hit you so hard. I can see that your arm is bruised and it must really hurt. I was wrong to do that. Can I help you with your chores tonight to make up? I know that hands are for helping, not hitting, so I'll try to catch myself when I am getting so mad, and listen to Mom. Will you please forgive me?

*Taken from *The Five Languages of Apology: How to Experience Healing in All Your Relationships* by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas (Northfield, 2006; www.fivelanguagesofapology.com) and a speech "The Importance of Apology in Healing and Reconciliation" by James V. Scott, General Council Officer for Residential Schools, available at www.united-church.ca.

OPTION 3: Invite an Elder to give a teaching or use *The Sharing Circle: Stories about First Nations Culture* by Theresa Meuse-Dallien, illus. Arthur Stevens (Nimbus, 2003)

In *The Sharing Circle*, there are seven stories. In consultation with Aboriginal neighbours, try to obtain and show the item referred to in the story, or consider making a drum or a dreamcatcher. If you are using the lectionary readings during the period May 25 to June 22, or October 5 or 19, 2008, the following stories are suggested:

May 25 (Oct. 5 or 19)	"The Eagle Feather" or "The Medicine Wheel"
June 1	"The Medicine Pouch" or find a story of your own about Grandfather Rocks
June 8	"The Sacred Herbs"
June 15	"The Talking Circle"
June 22	"The Drum" or "The Dreamcatcher"

As in Option 1, ask "wondering questions." I wonder if your family has something that is very special to them, or something that you do together all the time that is very special to you. It is so special that you and your family would not be the same if this was gone or not done. I wonder how it would feel if someone outside your family said that you could never show that object or do that again. I wonder what symbols, songs, or stories about God are important to you. I wonder what gifts from nature or stories and songs about nature are important to you. I wonder how it would feel if someone said you could never use them again.

You might conclude by explaining that at one time First Nations children were not allowed to learn about or use the medicine wheel, sacred herbs, and so on. The United Church has said it is sorry for that.



The Sharing Circle is available from United Church Resource Distribution (www.united-church.ca/sales/ucrd).