

Have a Heart Day 2020

Sunday School Activity: Jan. 26 through Feb. 9

What Are We Doing?

We are asking United Church communities of faith to take some time on a Sunday between January 26 and February 9 to mark a different kind of Valentine's Day: **Have a Heart Day**.

Have a Heart Day is a project of the [First Nations Child and Family Caring Society](#). Led by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, the Caring Society educates about and advocates for the rights of Indigenous kids across Canada. It works directly with Indigenous kids and communities to do this.

Because Have a Heart Day is about kids, we really want to involve kids in this activity. We hope non-Indigenous kids can learn about the different experiences of kids in Canada and take action out of a sense of compassion. We also hope Indigenous kids can speak from their hearts about what they want and need.

These materials are designed to help you help them do that. We hope you will

- use your community of faith's Sunday school time to introduce Have a Heart Day
- discuss these issues with the children so that they can respond with a "Have a Heart" Valentine to the prime minister
- gather the Valentines and send them to the Prime Minister in a package from your church (no postage required):

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

What Is Have a Heart Day All About?

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society says that "every child deserves to have a happy and healthy life."

What kinds of things make a happy and healthy life? Having a family, big or small, that loves you. Gathering together to sing and tell stories. Preparing and eating delicious foods that come from your family's background, using recipes that have been passed down. Living on the land where your family has been for many years.

Every kid deserves that. And lots of kids, including Indigenous kids, have that.

Some other important things are safe, comfortable schools close to home; clean water to drink and bathe in; good medical attention and someone to take care of you if you have to leave home for a little while.

Every kid deserves those things. But not every Indigenous kid gets them.

Why not?

For a long time, non-Indigenous people thought they knew what was best for Indigenous kids. This continues to this day. They don't recognize that Indigenous families and communities know best how to take care of their own children.

Because of something called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, governments are beginning to change their minds about this, but there is still a long way to go. On Have a Heart Day, we are asking kids in the United Church to help remind the prime minister that all kids should be treated the same: fairly!

Discussion

- Ask the children whether they had ever heard about Have a Heart Day before.
- Ask them if anything they heard today surprised them.
- Ask them what they think the phrase "have a heart" means.
- Explain that decision-making about what happens to Indigenous kids doesn't really start with their parents and communities, but with politicians in Ottawa.
- Depending on age, you may need to talk about how politicians are meant to listen to all Canadians, even kids.
- In light of what they've heard today, would they like to say some thing to those politicians about treating all kids fairly?

Craft

Invite the children to make a valentine for Prime Minister Trudeau based on your discussion.

You will need materials to make valentine cards: construction paper, markers, glue, and other craft supplies.

At the end of the time, gather the cards up and send all the Valentines together with a covering letter from your congregation.

Close with prayer.

Have a Heart Day Prayer

Dear God,

We know you love all children the same
and want us all to grow up healthy, safe, and strong
with our families and in our communities.

Help us make sure that everyone has a warm home,
a safe and comfy school,
clean water,
and the people who love us and care for us

Help the people who make these decisions
make them out of love.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

