RESISTANCE ON THE GIIMOOCH

The Life of Mary Courchene

TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

SEVEN OAKS SCHOOL DIVISION
community begins here

MARY'S INTRODUCTION

Aniin Boozhoo Wabano Wanikwe dishnigaz, Sagkeeng dongi, makwaondo doodem, Gimiwananaakwad indigo.

My English name is Mary Courchene and I am of the Bear Clan. I was born and raised in the community of Fort Alexander, now known as Sagkeeng First Nation.

Another name I have been gifted with and carry with great honour is, Elder Mary. For the past 14 years I have been Elder in Residence with Seven Oaks School Division. In this role I have met many, many, students, staff, and community members of Seven Oaks. I have to say, the enthusiasm, the inquisitiveness and wanting to know about our past that so many young people share, brings me great joy and healing.

I am a Residential School Survivor. The story highlighted here, is a major part of my life story. During my formative years from ages five to sixteen I spent the major part of my life at Residential School. *Kiinahmah kimahtaa gumi goh* (a so-called "place of learning"). As you will come to see, Residential Schools were said to be places of learning, but the lessons learned were often riddled with shame, devastation, and unimaginable trauma. These are lessons I have spent my whole life trying to make sense of. Lessons pressed upon me for the simple act of being born an Indigenous person in the era of Residential Schools.

In this journey you are about to take with me, you will learn about who I am. You will also come to know many of the people I love so dearly, including some of my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. I will be sharing my story as a Residential School Survivor, and some of my family will share their stories as intergenerational survivors of Residential Schools.

I was one of over 150,000 children who were forced into the residential school system. Too many stories of those deceased were never given the voice they so deserve. For them, for myself, for my grandchildren, great grandchildren, and for our collective whole, I share these stories. In an act of both truth, and reconciliation I bring voice to the stories that have been weaved into the person I am today. A person who I have been working to reclaim for as far back as I can remember.

Who doesn't love a good story? I know I do, and I have lots of them to share.

INTRODUCTION

Message from the Courchene Family

Biindigen! Welcome! Often, I find myself, listening and looking at my Mom in complete awe. My Mom is Elder Mary Courchene, and I am the sixth child of seven. My Mom is known as an Elder, residential school survivor/thriver, educational trailblazer, and an incredible storyteller; but to me and my family she is simply known as Mom and Nana. She is our matriarch, our rock, our biggest supporter, and of course, our hero.

The first time I heard my Mom's story was in 2001 when I was 32 years old, a university student in the Faculty of Education and attending a huge conference where my mother was the keynote speaker. At this point in my life, not only had I never heard her story, but I also didn't know much if anything about Indian Residential Schools. It stuns me to this day that not only did I not know my own mother's story but more so that I had learned nothing about Indian Residential Schools in all my years of schooling (university included).

Stories of Residential School survivors have moved people to understand the truth of Canada's dark history and have challenged them to ask what their role can be to reconcile, collectively working towards justice, healing and seeking equity.

Listening to stories like my Mom's has helped me understand what it is we've gone through as a family, the impact of the trauma's she experienced and how these live on in our families. Listening and learning also helps us celebrate our own resilience. These stories and the path set out by our matriarchs provide hope, as we make our way through many challenges. They give us strength, help us laugh and cry, and give us insights into the foundations of our cultures; cultures that are still strong. These stories help fuel our resurgence of community, of culture, of language, of self. They provide guidance for us and future generations.

As I write this, my mom is 85 years old and currently in her 14th year as Elder in Residence with Seven Oaks School Division. To this very day, my Mom continues to educate and inspire others, as she shares her stories and wisdom. Driven by her love of people, and seeing the promise in future generations, my Mom continues to invest whole heartedly. This project was created to honour all the children who never made it home, and whose stories we will never hear. It was created to honour my Mother's voice, so that her story and others like hers will never be forgotten.

– *Sherri, Daughter of Mary and George Courchene*
Spring, 2023

RESISTANCE ON THE GIIMOOCH (KII-MOOCH):

The title of this project came from conversations with Mary who, in speaking about her experiences in residential school, said "The priests and nuns tried to change who we were but they failed. We knew who we were and we still spoke our language. When we could not resist out loud, we resisted on the Giimooch (in secret). These acts helped us survive, to preserve our senses of self, our spirits and through our resistance and resilience, we fought to hold onto who we were. Through the whispers on the school ground in Anishinaabemowin and despite the fact that we lived in these institutions we were still doing it our way... on the Giimooch".

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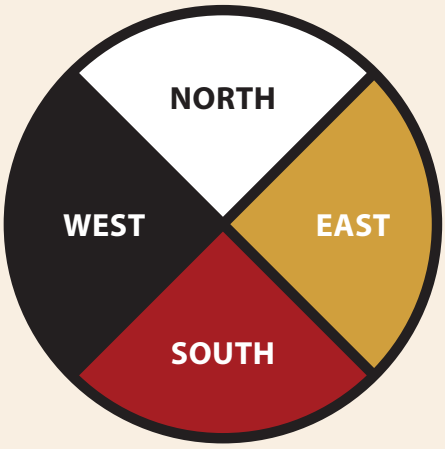

HOLDING SPACE

Some topics in this resource will be difficult to learn about. It is important to create a safe learning environment that respects and holds space for all experiences and emotions. Teachers are encouraged to engage with students from a Trauma-Informed perspective. For more information about Trauma-Informed practice, visit the Manitoba Trauma Information and Education Centre at https://trauma-informed.ca

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Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program

National Indian Residential School Survivor 24 Hour Crisis Line: **1-866-925-4419**

Hope for Wellness: http://www.hopeforwellness.ca

INSPIRATION FOR THIS RESOURCE

In 2017, the British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF) released the Gladys We Never Knew: The life of a child in a BC Indian Residential School. This resource focused on the story of Gladys Chapman, a young N'laka'pamux girl who attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School until her death from tuberculosis on April 29, 1931. She was 12 years old. Inspired by this work and recognizing the importance of documenting and teaching about the stories of residential school survivors; staff from the Manitoba Teachers Society met with Mary Courchene, her family, and teachers from Seven Oaks School Division to talk about developing a Manitoba based residential school resource.

After countless hours spent listening to Mary and her family share their stories, numerous conversations, planning sessions, and several writes and re-writes by our dedicated Seven oaks School Division teacher resource development team and staff at the Manitoba Teachers Society, Resistance on the Gii Mooch: The Life of Mary Courchene, has become a reality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We give our sincerest gratitude and thanks to Mary Courchene for sharing her kind heart, fierce spirit, strong voice, and generosity. We are grateful to Mary for the vision and dreams she continually shares, fosters, and fuels.

Mary's family was extensively involved in this project, from co-constructors and advisors, to sharing their own stories and lived experiences. Mary's family lives the legacy of her heart work, inspired by Mary, her late husband, George Courchene, and their large extended family and community.

Indigenous educators and allies, from the Manitoba Teachers Society and the Seven Oaks School Division, spent countless hours bringing this resource together. To each of their efforts, we are grateful. Their time and energies offered insights into lesson planning and navigating how to bring this ever-growing resource together.

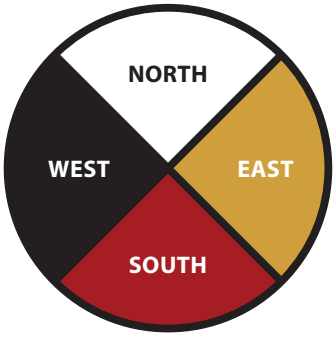
To Mary, her family, the teachers and staff involved, we say Miigwech! This partnership between Seven Oaks School Division and Manitoba Teachers' Society highlights the magic that can happen when we collectively work together, listen and co-create. It is our hope that Mary's story will inspire teachers and students to fight for truth, justice, and equity in this country and to continue to resist out loud, what Mary had to resist on the Gii Mooch.

THE FOUR DIRECTIONS FORMAT

The lessons in this resource are formatted around the Medicine Wheel's Four Directions. The Medicine Wheel is a symbol that represents many different things in groups of four, such as the four sacred medicines, the four parts of the self, and the four directions teachings. It is said that the four direction teachings were given to the Anishinaabe at the beginning of creation.

The four directions format was chosen to show Mary's life around the Medicine Wheel, beginning in the **East** (the direction of childhood), moving to the **South** (the direction of youth), then to the **West** (the direction of adulthood), and finally to the **North** (the direction of Elders). As students travel around the Medicine Wheel, they will gain a deeper understanding of Mary's life as an Anishinaabe woman surviving Canada's darkest history.

Please view Jonathan Courchene's shared guidance with the Medicine Wheel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usk3064x_R8



At the beginning of each section within this guide, there is a brief overview of the teachings of that direction, as shared by Anishinaabe Elder Dan Thomas. Following this overview, there is a description of enduring understandings, student learnings, and assessment. Each direction has four accompanying lessons. The directions and lessons are presented in order for ease of use.

KEY LEARNINGS

Throughout this resource, students will learn about Elder Mary Courchene's life story while exploring topics including the treaty relationship, the Medicine Wheel's four stages of life, Residential Schools, displacement, important moments in Indigenous history, identity, agency, and living a good life.

Oral storytelling is an important aspect of Indigenous culture and through a series of short videos, students will hear directly from Mary about her life experiences. Students will be expected to engage in various learning activities such as small group discussions, Think/Pair/Share, mind mapping, journal responses, creating art, researching, and presenting.

Finally, as a culminating project, students will create a storytelling project where they will have the opportunity to share their story and what this project has meant to them.

Sagkeeng, 1950's.

EAST OVERVIEW CHILDHOOD

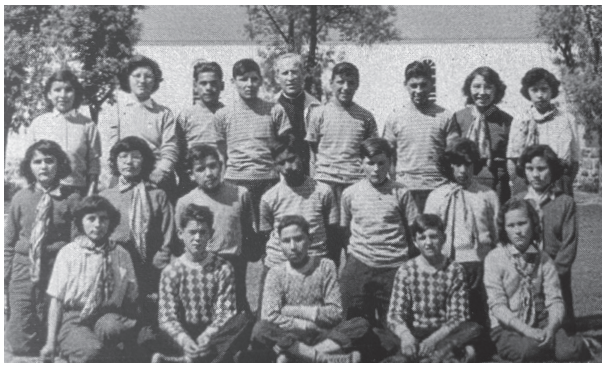
We begin our lessons in the East, where life begins. East is the direction in which we enter the world, and we welcome the sun each morning. East is the beginning of the direction towards the Good Life. During this time, we are children and our parents, family, and community members are encouraged to teach us about the teachings of the four directions - how to be kind, faithful, truthful, caring, and sharing. All of this is centered around love.

Mary describes this stage of life as "the best years" of her life. In Mary's Story Part 1, students will learn about Mary's home community of Sagkeeng First Nation and how she grew up surrounded by the love and nurturing of her relatives. Students will also learn how excited Mary initially was to go to school.

Students will explore topics including: personal identity, culture, and community; relationship with land and place including Indigenous nations and the areas they call home; Treaty and land acknowledgements; and the importance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Students will be encouraged to think critically, read, write, infer, question, and discuss these important topics from an empathetic perspective.

Mary Courchene, age 13



Mary, middle row, first on the right

LESSON 1

MINO PIMATISIWIN (THE GOOD LIFE)

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	1 hour

OVERVIEW

In this foundational lesson, students will read Mary Courchene's introduction, watch the video trailer, and explore key vocabulary words they will encounter throughout this unit, including *"Mino Pimatisiwin"*, meaning "The Good Life".

MATERIALS

- Mary's Introduction handout
- Video trailer introduction https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qJH1250YSY&feature=youtu.be
- Vocabulary Worksheet (Note: Cut out the "Definitions" for student sorting)

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

Participation in small group and whole class discussions.

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

Definition sorting through the Vocabulary Worksheet

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Identity- sense of self

Students will:

- explore concepts of identity, culture, and community.
- explore the dynamic relationships of people with the land.
- use the circle of courage concepts to examine the mino pimatisiwin https://starr.org/circle-of-courage/

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Empathy
- Community Building
- Visual Presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Begin the first lesson by reading this description of the East Overview to the class based on the teaching by Anishinaabe Elder, Dan Thomas:

   We begin our lessons in the East, where life begins. East is the direction in which we enter the world, and we welcome the sun each morning. East is the beginning of the direction towards the Good Life. The Good Life is the first stage of life. During this time, we are children and our parents should teach us about the teachings of the four directions - how to be kind, faithful, truthful, caring, and sharing. All of this is centered around love.

2. Hand out or post on media board, a written copy of Mary's introduction (BLM 2) to each student. As a class read Mary's introduction. Debrief with a whole class discussion at the end.
3. Discussion questions might include the following:
   a) What is your initial reaction to Mary's introduction?
   b) Have you ever learned from an Elder or Knowledge Keeper before? If so, what did you learn?
   c) What are you most excited about to learn from Mary?

ACQUIRE

4. Next, re-play and re-read the introduction and stop to discuss key terminology.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS MIGHT INCLUDE:

   a) Is anyone familiar with any of the Anishinaabemowin words?
   b) Where is Sagkeeng First Nation? Can we locate it on a map? How far away is it from where we are now?
   c) What does it mean to be inquisitive? Would you consider yourself inquisitive?
   d) What do you know about residential schools?
   e) What does Mary mean when she refers to her family as "intergenerational survivors of residential school"?
   f) What do you think reconciliation means?

5. Watch the video trailer of Elder Mary: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qJH1250YSY

APPLY

6. Have students work in pairs or groups (no more than 3) to define key terms on the Vocabulary Worksheet. Have groups match the correct definition with the vocabulary word. Once they have all the answers in the correct spaces, have students glue the definition down. Finally, have each student complete the "In my own words or picture" section of the Vocabulary Worksheet. This will allow each student to keep track of key words throughout the unit.

MARY'S INTRODUCTION

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qJH1250YSY&feature=youtu.be

VOCABULARY WORKSHEET

VOCABULARY WORD	IN MY OWN WORDS OR PICTURE	DICTIONARY DEFINITION
Belonging		
Colonization		
Decolonization		
Elder		
Genocide		
Indian Act		

VOCABULARY WORD	IN MY OWN WORDS OR PICTURE	DICTIONARY DEFINITION
Indigenous		
Inter-generational		
Racism		
Reconciliation		
Relationship		
Residential School		
Settler		

VOCABULARY WORD	IN MY OWN WORDS OR PICTURE	DICTIONARY DEFINITION
Stereotypes		
Survivor		
The Good Life *(Mino-Pimatisiwin)*		
Trauma		
Treaty		
Truth		

DEFINITIONS (CUT OUT ONLY THE DEFINITION)

VOCABULARY WORD	DICTIONARY DEFINITION
Belonging	Close or intimate relationship
Colonization	Subjugation of a people or area especially as an extension of state power
Decolonization	The shedding of the colonizer's values and practices
Elder	One having authority by virtue of age and experience
Genocide	The deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group
Indian Act	The primary law the federal government uses to administer Indian Status, local First Nations, governments and the management of reserveland. It also outlines governmental obligations to First Nations peoples.

VOCABULARY WORD	DICTIONARY DEFINITION
Indigenous	Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.
Inter-generational	Existing or occurring between generations.
Racism	A belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.
Reconciliation	To restore to friendship or harmony.
Relationship	The state of being related or interrelated.
Residential School	In Canada a government-supported boarding school for children from Inuit and other Indigenous communities.

VOCABULARY WORD	DICTIONARY DEFINITION
Settler	Someone who settles in a new region or colony.
Stereotypes	A standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.
Survivor	To remain alive or in existence: live on.
The Good Life *(Mino-Pimatisiwin)*	This is what we all strive for. When you have all the important things you need and want in life. This is a life centered around love.
Trauma	A disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury.
Treaty	An agreement or arrangement made by negotiation.
Truth	The property of being in accord with fact or reality.

LAND, LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	1 hour

OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will conduct internet research to learn about the traditional territories they occupy while gaining an appreciation for the Indigenous nations who have called this land home since time immemorial. Students will also explore the various agreements that were made and come to understand the phrase "We are all treaty people".

MATERIALS

- Computers/Laptops for each student
- Internet Connection
- Websites:
  - Treaty Relations of Manitoba. http://www.trcm.ca/treaties/
  - Find out whose traditional territory you live on Native-Land.ca
  - Interactive Treaty Map. https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1605796363328/16 05796417543
  - Residential Schools in Canada Interactive Map https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools-in-canada-interactive-map
  - Community proximity to former Residential Schools. https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/beyond-94-residential-school-map/
- Optional: Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada (some schools, divisions, Teacher Societies, or libraries may have this physical resource for teachers to use)

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

Independent and group exploration.

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

Completing the Land, Language and Identity questions

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will determine the Indigenous group(s) who call this land home.

Their connectedness in Canada to " We are All Treaty People".

Students will look at Treaty acknowledgments for their respective geographic area and unpack the intent of acknowledgments.

Students will research linguistic groups(s) and name(s) linked to the area(s) they call home.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Research
- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Community building
- Inferring
- Questionning

ACTIVATE

1. Have students independently explore the various websites listed in the materials section, or the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada.

ACQUIRE

2. Have students follow along as you take them through relevant sections of the websites. As a class explore the following:

   a) Using the Native-Land website and map, find out which Indigenous nations(s) have lived in the territory you occupy since time immemorial. How do you say their name(s)?

   b) What was the land originally called? The name may remain today, or it may be different.

   c) Using the Interactive Treaty Map, determine which treaty governs the area you occupy (if applicable)?

   d) Talk about school announcements, which may include "We are all Treaty people". What does this mean? What group(s) are acknowledged and why?

   e) Using either the Canadian Encyclopedia or the CBC's Residential School Map, look at the map of Residential Schools locations across Canada. Which residential school is the closest to where you are?

APPLY

Have students complete the Land, Language and Identity worksheet, filling in the answers gained from their internet research.

Additional Resources:

- Culture and Language Aboriginal Place Names https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/culture_and_language/documents/aboriginal_place_names.pdf
- Starting From the Heart: Going Beyond a Land Acknowledgement https://etfofnmi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Going-Beyond-A-Land-Acknowledgement-FINAL-VERSION.pdf
- *This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake-Up, Take Action and Do the Work* by Tiany Jewell (2020)
- "We Are All Treaty People" Treaty Relations Commission
- Indigenous Peoples of Canada Teacher Resources https://cangeoeducation.ca/en/maps/indigenous-peoples-atlas-of-canada/

LAND, LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Using internet research, take a moment to learn about the land you reside on.

1. Where I live is currently called: _____
   _____
2. It was originally called: _____
   _____
3. The Indigenous group(s) who call this land home is/are: _____
   _____
   _____
4. The language(s) originally spoken on this land are: _____
   _____
   _
5. Some things I'd like to know more about the land I live on: _____
   _____
   _____
6. The Treaty and/or land acknowledgement that is used to recognize the land which I call "home" is: _____
   _____
7. Sagkeeng First Nation (formerly called Fort Alexander) is located on Treaty: _____
   _____
8. Some things I'd like to know more of about the community of Sagkeeng are: _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
9. I am grateful for the land because: _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

LESSON 3

THE BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	2 Classes

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will discuss family relationships, while learning about Mary's time as a child with her family. Students will explore concepts of identity, culture, and community in relation to individuals, societies, and nations. Finally, they will have the opportunity to bring in special objects for a show-and-tell activity.

Note: Depending on the students, some teachers may want to adjust this lesson as they see fit as discussions about "home" and "family" may be triggering.

MATERIALS

- Mary's Story Part 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjeaFv1JBGc

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- Whole Class Discussion
- Think/Pair/Share Reflection

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Show and Tell Presentation

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Students will understand concepts of identity, culture, and community in relation to individuals, societies, and nations.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Research
- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Community building
- Inferring
- Questioning

ACTIVATE

1. As a class, discuss and consider how diverse families may look in your classroom community.
2. Show video clip of Elder Mary reflecting on the best years of her life at home before going to residential school.
    - Using an oral/drawing written reflection, get students to reflect on the best years of their own life.

ACQUIRE

3. Show students "Mary's Story Part 1", where Mary reflects on the importance of family and how strong the bond between Mary and her aunty was as they shared bannock making every morning. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjeaFv1JBGc
4. After the video has played, have students turn to a partner for Think/Pair/Share draw, or write about a special memory, or moment in time they had with someone they care about. Discuss what made the moment so memorable.

APPLY

5. Thinking about those special memories with family or a close friend, students will design and create their own personal memory bag.
6. Students will bring in a minimum of 5 small objects that best symbolize what is valued by their family, friends, and/or culture to put in their memory bag. These could be such things as: family recipes, souvenirs from a family trip, a talking stick, a walking stick, or another item that has been handed down for generations in their family.
7. In small groups, allow each student to present their memory bag. Students can explain the significance of each item they chose for their memory bag.

Please see link below for a more detailed lesson on creating personal memory bags.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES:

- Mary's Favourite Bannock Recipe (attached)
- **Shi-shi-etko** by Nicola I. Campbell
- **Shi-shi-etko Personal Memory Bags Lesson from The Gladys We Never Knew: The life of a child in a BC Indian Residential School** https://issuu.com/teachernewsmag/docs/ebookr

MARY'S FAVOURITE BANNOCK RECIPE

Black Line Masters 5

8 cups flour

4 tablespoons baking powder

1 cup crisco

Very warm water….

Bake at 400 for about 35 mins

LESSON 4

THE STAGES OF LIFE

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	1 Hour

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will learn about the importance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Students will view a video by Mary's first born grandson, Jonathan Courchene, on interpretations of the Medicine Wheel that he learned from Elders.

Jonathan Courchene: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usk3064x_R8

NOTE: *Bringing in an Elder or Knowledge Keeper should be your first choice when doing lessons about Anishinaabe teachings. If that is not possible we have presented this lesson to you. If you still do not feel comfortable, we have included additional resources.*

MATERIALS

- Christine M'Lot (3 part series on Medicine wheel + goal setting)
  PART 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1lOLDTJGJk&ab_channel=ChristineM%27Lot
  PART 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0N9bI9FSbcA&ab_channel=ChristineM%27Lot
  PART 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KDz_nDiNP0&ab_channel=ChristineM%27Lot
- "All Creation Represented: A Child's Guide to the Medicine Wheel" by Joyce Perreault (optional)

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- Whole class discussion and brainstorm

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Mind Map
- Prezi Presentation

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Identity- sense of self, loss of identity, culture, and language.
- Students will explore the dynamic relationships of people with the land and environment.
- The importance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Visual Presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Cooperative Learning (Discussion)

ACTIVATE

1. View Jonathan Courchene's video about the Medicine Wheel.
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usk3064x_R8
2. Have students discuss, write or draw about what they learned from Jonathan Courchene's video.

ACQUIRE

3. Share an interactive or paper version of the medicine wheel. Take the students around the medicine wheel starting in the east to north, while explaining that these quadrants represent the different stages of life from birth, youth, adult and Elder (you can also add the seasons, medicines, colours, and animals).

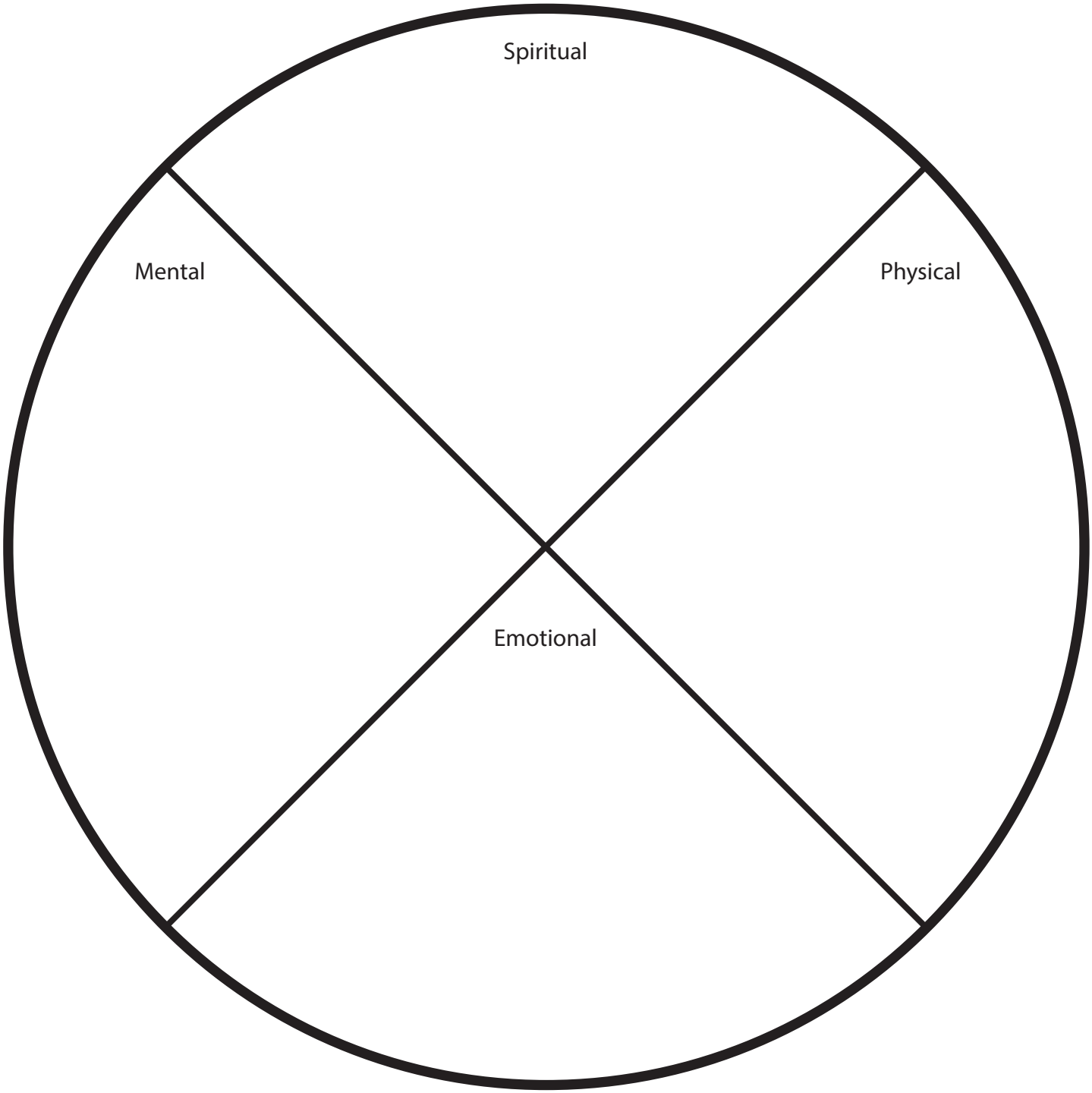
APPLY

4. Have students watch part 3 of Christine M'Lots video series and complete the goal setting portion of the workshop.
   PART 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1lOLDTJGJk&ab_channel=ChristineM%27Lot
   PART 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0N9bI9FSbcA&ab_channel=ChristineM%27Lot
   PART 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KDz_nDiNP0&ab_channel=ChristineM%27Lot

LEARNING RESOURCES (BOOKS, WEBSITES, VIDEOS ETC...):

- How to create a prezi presentation-https://support.prezi.com/hc/en-us/articles/360003479014-Creating-a-new-presentation-in-Prezi-Present
  Example: https://prezi.com/8g1-x7xob1vj/life-cycles-butterfly-vs-hum an/life.
- "Be A Good Ancestor" by Leona Prince and Gabrielle Prince

MEDICINE WHEEL GOAL SETTING



SOUTH OVERVIEW YOUTH

We continue our lessons in the South, the direction of truth. This is the direction of the teenage years; the fast life. This is also a time where Indigenous youth would traditionally go fasting. In this time of life, it is said that if you practice these four directions teachings, it should keep you on the Good Life road. The teenage stage is also the wondering and wandering life. In this stage, you try to find yourself. You are wondering about life, and you wander and travel around to find out who you are.

Mary Courchene, age 16

In this stage of life, Mary was a student at residential school. Students will watch Mary's recount of the first days of school and how confusing and hurtful it was for her. Mary recalls a time when she was beginning to wonder about things, and she asked a nun, "why do you get to speak your own language but we don't?" Sadly, Mary was punished for asking this question, and she describes some of the cruel punishments that her and other students had to endure.

Students will explore topics including: concepts of school and being treated with respect versus fear and humiliation; the loss of identity, culture, and language; sense of displacement; unmarked graves; empathy; and the history of Indigenous education in Canada.

Students will be encouraged to think critically, read, write, connect, infer, question, visualize, and discuss these important topics from an empathetic perspective.

DISPLACEMENT

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	1 hour

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will explore their feelings about school. Students will compare and contrast images of their school with images of the residential school Mary attended. Students will watch Mary's video where she explains what residential school was like for her, and then students will compare and contrast their school to the residential school Mary attended.

MATERIALS

- Pictures of home school of students
- Pictures of Fort Alexander Residential school
- Venn Diagram
- Mary's Story Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHuaJ-MnINQ
- https://www.wordclouds.com

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

Whole class word splash

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

Compare and contrast venn diagram

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Students will explore the differences between their school and residential schools.
- Identity, sense of self, loss of identity, culture, and language,
- Students will look at the sense of displacement that Mary felt

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Discussion
- Empathy
- Reflection
- Inferring and Connecting

ACTIVATE

1. Begin the first lesson of the South by reading this description of the South Overview to the class based on teachings by Anishinaabe Elder, Dan Thomas:

   We continue our lessons in the South, the direction of truth. This is the direction of the teenage years; the fast life. This is also a time where Indigenous youth would traditionally go fasting. In this time of life, it is said that if you practice these four directions teachings, it should keep you on the Good Life road. The teenage stage is also the wondering and wandering life. In this stage, you try to find yourself. You are wondering about life, and you wander and travel around to find out who you are.

2. Next, have students think of words that come to mind when they think of their school. Create a whole class word splash on the board. Alternatively, create a word cloud using the website https://www.wordclouds.com
3. As a class look at images of their school (found on the internet and/or social media).
4. Discuss the similarities and differences between pictures of their school, pictures of Fort Alexander Residential School, and pictures of Stony Mountain Penitentiary, available online.

ACQUIRE

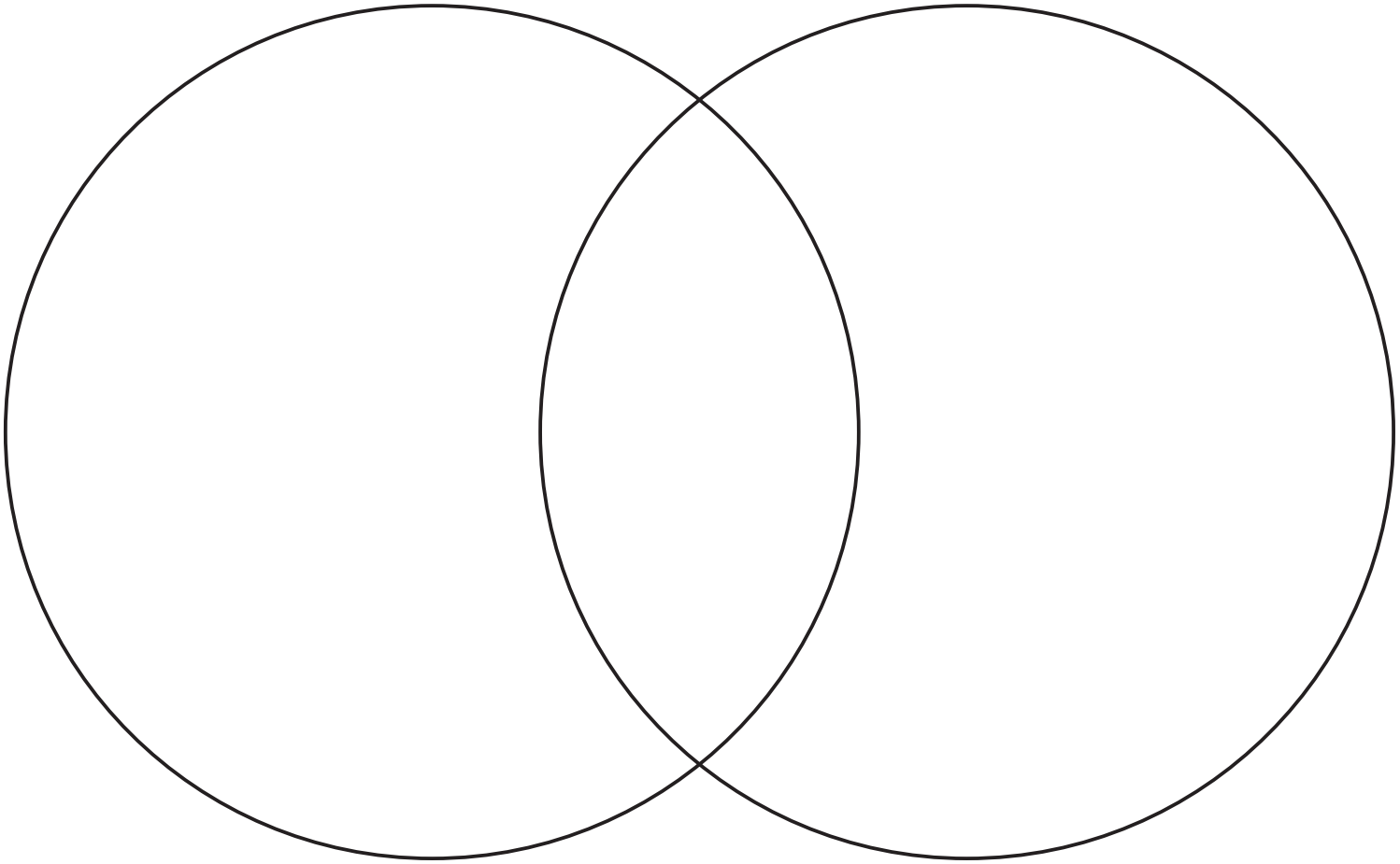
5. Watch "Mary's Story Part 2": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHuaJ-MnINQ

APPLY

6. Have students work in small groups to create a venn diagram to compare and contrast their school with the residential school Mary attended. Encourage students to include words to describe the emotions they feel.
7. Print, post, and compare the venn diagrams.

VENN DIAGRAM

Compare and contrast your school to the residential school Mary attended.



LESSON 6

THE STAGES OF LIFE

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	2-3 Hours

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will read poetry related to Indigenous identity and the residential school experience. Students will create agamograph art comparing how residential schools treated students, to how it looks for students to be treated with love and respect.

MATERIALS

- Mary's Story Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHuaJ-MnINQ
- O Canada Poem
- Trauma-Informed Schools Poem
- Supplies for Agamograph art - Colored Pencils, Markers, or Crayons; Scissors, Glue (not included)
- Agamograph Art Directions
- Agamograph Templates 1,2,3

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- Whole Class Discussions

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Agamograph Art

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Students will explore concepts of identity, culture, language, and community in relation to individuals, societies, and nations.
- Students will explore dynamic relationships of people with the land, place, and environment.
- Students will collectively examine the question, "Why were Residential Schools trying so hard to take away students' identity as Indigenous people?"

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Empathy
- Community building
- Visual presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Pose this critical thinking question to the class: "How did residential schools attempt to take away Indigenous students' identities?" Solicit student responses. (Possible answers: Taking away language, culture, connection to family and community, self-worth and confidence etc.)

ACQUIRE

2. As a class, re-watch Mary's Story Part 2. Focus on Mary's story of the puzzle. Point out that the emotions associated with this story are fear and humiliation.
3. As a class, read and discuss the poem, "O Canada" by Hannah Turner. Discuss the following:
   a) What aspects of the poem are similar to Mary's experience at residential school?
   b) Why do you think the author used parts of "O Canada" in her poem? What is she trying to convey by doing this?
4. As a class, read and discuss the poem, "Trauma Informed Schools Poem" by author unknown. Discuss the following:
   a) What are some differences between the learning environment discussed in this poem, and the learning environment at residential school discussed in the previous poem?
   b) What stereotypes do this poem confront and challenge?
   c) What line stood out to you and why?

APPLY

5. Teachers create a T-Chart on the board. On one side write "What did Residential Schools want for students and their lives?" and on the other side, "What does it look like to value students and love them for who they are?" Encourage students to gather ideas from both poems read in class today, Mary's story, and their own experiences at school.
6. As a class, complete the T-Chart.
7. In partners, students will create two sided Agamograph art. The art should be informed by the two sides of the T-Chart generated by the whole class. Students can generate ideas together for each side, or they can work independently on one side each. The two sides will come together at the later steps of the project. Distribute the "Agamograph Art Directions" and "Agamograph Templates" to each group.

   Note: An agamograph is a series of images that change at different angles. This type of art is named after Yaacov Agam who is known for using this technique to make optical and kinetic art.

O CANADA

Written by Hannah Turner (Cree from Misipawistik Cree Nation; written at age 15)

O Canada
Broken and bruised
Children's bodies wickedly abused
On their precious skin are scars
And deep within there lay unseen wounds that surround their hearts
The product of school
Rather than a place to learn
It was where children were told in death they'd burn
Not unless they changed their beliefs
The loss of culture leaving peoples in a state of grief
To this day we are not given the chance to speak
We live in a society where history is on repeat
Indigenous peoples silenced once with hate and violence
Now silenced with quiet action
Marginalized but still we thrive

O Canada
Trying to bury our history with the graves of children stripped from their homes
History cannot hide their bones
Untrue are the words "we stand on guard for thee"
Only made true when all are free
How are we to trust?
When over and over again, you remain reluctant to stand with us
Our calls for action, collecting dust.

O Canada
Your men in power too ignorant to hear our cries
Is that what you call trustworthy?
Building pipelines
How are we as First Nations expected to shine, when the white man walks forward leaving us behind
Like dominos we fall
But we push, we fight, we stand tall

O Canada
A change is yet to come and you have some nerve
Appreciating your fresh water, still unseen on reserve
We gave you a home
One in which you take for granted

O Canada
You say you acknowledge Treaty 1 land
But still no helping hands
All we ask is for you to prove your words with action
And in return receive our passion
Passion for a better Canada

O Canada
We stay resilient
Never shall we fade into oblivion
Even if we are just
The Inconvenient Indians

TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOLS POEM

Ask me what does it mean to be Anishinaabe?
And I'll rattle off statistics
Of depression and suicide rates,
Of youth who become alcoholics and don't graduate

Ask me about my future
and I'll tell you I don't know
I don't know what I like to do,
I can't see past today

Ask me about Powwows
And I'll tell you about my friends pastor,
Who told me powwows are a ceremony
to worship the devil

Ask me about my family
And I'll tell you about how
My friends ask if my parents
Are alcoholics who beat me

Ask me about my grades,
And I'll tell you how I haven't
Gone to class for months
Because I just don't care

Ask me about smudging,
And I'll tell you about
how I got suspended
Because I smelt like weed

Ask me about my principal,
And I'll tell you how
She walks around with a cop
Every morning and no one knows why

Ask me about my teachers
And I'll tell you about how
they kicked me out of class
Because I don't participate

Ask me about equality and justice
And I'll tell you about the racist comments
And being told to ignore them
To just walk away

Ask me about advocating for Aboriginal rights
and I'll tell you about when I got told 'to get
over it, it happened years ago'
My kokum talks about it like it happened yesterday

Ask me about communication
And I'll tell you about how
Lost and trapped I feel
I have no one to ask or talk to

TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOLS POEM, CONTINUED

Ask me what does it mean to be Anishinaabe?
And I'll show you how beautiful our culture is
How resilient and strong our people are
How we are healing together as a nation

Ask me about my passions
And I'll tell you about my teacher
Who helped me realize
My love for music and art

Ask me about my culture
And I'll tell you about
The powwows my school hosts
And participates in

Ask me about my family
And I'll tell you about
Our successes and healing
That is taking place

Ask me about my grades
And I'll tell you about how
helpful and understanding
my teachers are

Ask me about smudging
And I'll tell you about the safe
space we have in our school to
celebrate Anishinaabe culture

Ask me about my teachers
And I'll tell you about how
they talk to me and show they
care and don't threaten me

Ask me about Racism
And I'll tell you about how
Our school doesn't tolerate
Racial slurs or discrimination

Ask me about Aboriginal rights,
And I'll tell you about how
Our school is supporting the red dress project
For missing and murdered Aboriginal women

Ask me about communication
And I'll tell you about how
Easy it is to approach and talk
To teachers and administration

Ask me about trauma
And I'll tell you about how
Our school is informed and
Is helping us celebrate who we are

Everything that happened to our people,
Doesn't define who I am as a
human, I am proud to be
Anishinaabe.

AGAMOGRAPH ART DIRECTIONS

1. Get paper templates 1 and 2.
2. On template 1 draw images and record words related to the question, "What did Residential Schools want for Indigneous children and their lives?".
3. On template 2 draw images and record words related to the question, "What does it look like to value kids and love them for who they are?". On each template draw different pictures using colored pencils, markers, or crayons.
4. Use the scissors to cut each colored picture following the rectangular boxes as a guide.
5. Get template 3. Begin to match each number and letter to the blank template, alternating the picture strips you cut out.
6. Glue down each colored rectangular strip to the blank template with the matching number or letter.
7. When glue is dry, crease at every fold to create the shape of an accordion. Look at your art from each side and see the two very different images and ideas about children that you have created.

Note: *Students may want to create their art on the reverse/back sides of the templates one and two. This way the numbers won't show on their art pieces.*

AGAMOGRAPH ART TEMPLATES

Picture 1 Template:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Picture 2 Template:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G

Sample Gluing Template:

(bottom of image) (top of image)

1
A
2
B
3
C
4
D
5
E
6
F
7
G

Note: *Students will need to use a larger (legal size) paper to glue down their work. This template provides the pattern to follow when arranging and gluing their work.*

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, THOUSANDS OF STORIES

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	1 hour

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will continue to learn about Mary's experience attending residential school. Students will also watch a short video detailing aspects of Chief Robert Joseph's experience attending residential school. Students will then apply their understandings of residential school by writing a journal entry from a particular perspective.

MATERIALS

- "Mary's Story Part 3" Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5itCsJanqjY
- "Nanwayut: We Are All One" Video (CBC) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zuRQmwaREY
- "Residential Schools: Show What You Know" handout
- "Residential Schools: Journal Entry Outline" worksheet
- "Residential School: Journal Entry Rubric"

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- "Whole class discussion questions

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Journal Entry

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Identity- sense of self, loss of identity, culture, language
- Reconciliation - shared stories
- Students will explore concepts of identity, culture, and community in relation to individual, societies, and nations.
- Students will explore the dynamic relationships of people with the land, places, and environment.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Empathy
- Inferring
- Questioning

ACTIVATE AND ACQUIRE

1. Together as a class, watch "Mary's Story Part 3". (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5itCsJanqjY) Debrief the video by asking students the following questions:

   a) What did Mary say bothered her the most?

   b) Why did Mary feel hate towards her family?

   c) Why does Mary say she is so grateful for her father?

   d) Why does Mary tell her story?

2. Next, watch a CBC video called "Nanwayut: We Are All One" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zuRQmwaREY) where Chief Robert Joseph shares his experience as a residential school survivor and the importance of truth and reconciliation in Canada. Debrief the video by asking students the following questions:

   a) What similar experiences did Mary and Chief Robert Joseph have at residential school?

   b) Mary and Chief Robert Joseph attended residential schools at different times, in different provinces. What do these similarities tell you about the residential school agenda?

APPLY

3. Inform students that their task is to take what they have learned about residential schools and write a journal entry sharing their understanding of Residential Schools from a particular perspective. Hand-out the "Residential Schools: Show What you Know" assignment guidelines.
4. Distribute the "Residential Schools: Journal Entry Outline" worksheet and "Residential School: Journal Entry Rubric", reviewing the assignment criteria.
5. Have students select what point of view they will write a journal entry from. Students then complete their respective journal entries.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- The Secret Path by MTS
- Downie Wenjack Fund
- Gord Downie Interview with family

Note: *This writing activity may be triggering to some young people. Please be aware of the students' lived experiences and adjust the assignment as you feel necessary.*

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS: SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

You have learned many stories about Mary and Residential Schools. Pick a topic from the list below and write a journal entry based on the information you have learned. Make sure that your journal entry is as accurate as possible and includes relevant details.

1. You are writing from Mary's point of view. You are questioning why you can't speak your language at the school. You are also wondering about your future, including what it will look like. **What are you hoping for your future? Will you be a teacher, like you dream of being? Who are some of the key people in your life, and why are they important to you?**
2. You are writing from the perspective of a teenager at Residential School. You have been at the school since you were very young. You don't know how much time you can take being there. You are contemplating running away from the school and going home. **Why are you wanting to run away? What would be your fears and worries?**
3. You are writing from the perspective of a parent of a young person who is away at Residential School. You miss your child so much. You also can't understand why your child has to live at the school full time to learn new things. **What are you feeling? If you could change how these schools operate, how would you change them?**
4. You are writing from the perspective of a young child who is still at home with their family. The child is talking to their parents about having to go away to Residential School. **What may the child be saying to their parents? What are they nervous about? What are they wondering about?**

Questions/Ideas to consider in bold are to be answered in your journal entry.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS: JOURNAL ENTRY OUTLINE

I have decided to write my journal entry from the point of view of:

a. _____ Mary, when she is a student my age writing about her experiences at Residential School.

b. _____ A teenager at Residential School who is contemplating running away.

c. _____ A parent of a young person who is away at Residential School.

d. _____ A young child who is talking to their family about having to go away to Residential School.

Remember:

You will need to include at least FIVE details about your feelings towards Residential Schools and your lived experiences. In addition, be sure to answer the question that is bolded on the previous page.

Use the space below to brainstorm some ideas to include in your journal entry.

Residential Schools: Journal Entry

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL: JOURNAL ENTRY RUBRIC

	Not Yet (1)	On Your Way (2)	You Got It (3)	Expert (4)
Requirements: Does your work include answers to the question(s) asked?	• work does not answer questions at all	• work shows minimal effort at answering question	• work answers the questions to a satisfactory level	• work exceeds requirements. Student elaborates more than needed to enhance their journal entry
Ideas/Content: Does your work show a high level of understanding about Residential Schools?	• work lacks understanding of concepts and ideas related to Residential Schools	• work shows a developing understanding of concepts and ideas related to Residential Schools	• work shows a solid understanding of concepts and ideas related to Residential Schools	• work shows an amazing understanding of concepts and ideas related to Residential Schools
Organization: Is your work organized in a thoughtful way?	• work not completed in a satisfactory manner. Student shows minimal effort and/ or does not use class time effectively.	• work completed but lacks enhancements that would improve the overall quality.	• work is completed in a satisfactory manner. Student shows good effort in their work.	• work exceeds expectations. Exemplary commitment to the project has been shown.

Comments: **Total: /12**

LESSON 8

HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

GRADE LEVEL
6-12

TIME
3-4 Hours

OVERVIEW
Students will discuss some of the expectations Mary had going into residential school versus her actual experience. Students will then conduct research into the historical events and attitudes that led to the creation of residential schools.

MATERIALS
- "Mary's Story Part 1": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjeaFv1JBGc
- KWL Chart
- Computer/Internet
- To help students with their internet research, we suggest teachers select resources about some of the following topics: Terra Nullius & the Doctrine of Discovery, Royal Proclamation of 1763, Treaties, Indian Act, Residential Schools, White Paper, Indian Act Amendment, Oka Crisis, Idle No More, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)
- Turn and Talk
- KWL Chart

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)
- Research Project

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
- Identity- sense of self, loss of identity, culture, language.
- The connection to Canada (We are all Treaty people), Indigenous History.
- Reconciliation- shared stories
- Students will explore identity, culture, and community in relation to individuals, societies, and nations.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS
- Writing
- Critical thinking
- Empathy
- Visual presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Begin by having students re-watch "Mary's Story Part 1"(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjeaFv1JBGc). Before beginning the clip, advise students to pay extra close attention to Mary's thoughts of how school would be, versus the reality of her experiences attending school.
2. When the video is over, have students turn and talk with a partner about Mary's expectations versus reality.
3. Solicit pairs to share their answers with the class.

ACQUIRE

4. Pose this question to the class: If school was awful for Mary and the other children, why did they have to attend these schools and what led to their creation? Chart students' answers down on a KWL chart titled "Indigenous History and Education"". This will be under the 'what we know' section.
5. Have students work in pairs on a research assignment. Assign each pair a card with a different topic (these topics are in historical order). Each pair of students will then complete internet research on their given topic.
    - Terra Nullius & the Doctrine of Discovery
    - Royal Proclamation of 1763
    - Treaties
    - Indian Act
    - Residential Schools
    - White Paper
    - Indian Act Amendment
    - Oka Crisis
    - Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)
    - Idle No More

APPLY

6. Each group will do a short presentation to the rest of the class on what they have learned about their topic, making sure to include a brief discussion about how Indigenous communities have been impacted. Presentations can be in any format - PowerPoint, speech, etc.
7. As groups are presenting, students take notes on the presentation, by completing the "What I learned" section of their KWL Charts.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (books, websites, videos etc...):

- Blanket Exercise
- https://leveller.ca/2019/09/timeline-of-canadian-colonialism-and-indigenous-resistance/

KWL Chart

Topic: Indigenous History and Education

WHAT I **K**NOW	WHAT I **W**ANT TO KNOW	WHAT I **L**EARNED

WEST OVERVIEW ADULTHOOD

We continue our lessons in the West, the direction of truth, where people know themselves well and show the world the truth about who they are. In this stage, people are under the guidance of your Elders. In the truth life, people are to practice the four directions teachings again. If they don't practice the truth life, they may enter the "show off " life that attracts attention, even though it's not really who they are. If people in this stage of life do this, they will live to see this time called the Busy Life, where they are so busy living, that are too busy to think about life. They are too busy working to put food on the table, and caring for their children. In their busy-ness they should still try to practice the four directions teachings. Often people form unions in this state. The Third Direction is the direction of strength and faith. We are to have the strength to be faithful to ourselves, others, and the creator. If they practice these, they will come to a time called the Elders Life.

Mary, George and first born child, Elaine

LESSON 9

WHO AM I?

GRADE LEVEL
6-12

TIME
1 Hour

OVERVIEW
Throughout this lesson, students will explore the concept of personal identity and how identity is intersectional, fluid, and influenced through lived experiences. Students will explore their own identities.

MATERIALS
- Identity Circle Wheel
- Positionality Organizer

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)
- Discuss aspects of identity and write and visualize an identity wheel example for students on whiteboard/online.

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)
- Identity circles and/or Positionality Organizer.
- Participation in small group and whole class discussions.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
- Identity - sense of self, loss of identity, culture, language.
- Their connectedness in Canada (we are all Treaty people)
- Reconciliation-shared stories
- Students will explore concepts of identity, culture, and community in relation to individuals, societies, and nations.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS
- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Community building
- Empathy
- Visual presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussion

ACTIVATE

1. Begin the first lesson of the West by reading this description of the West Overview to the class based on the teaching by Anishinaabe Elder, Dan Thomas:
   We continue our lessons in the West, the direction of truth, where people travelling through this stage know themselves well and show the world the truth about who they are. This is the adult stage of life. In the truth life, people are to practice the four directions teachings again. If you don't practice the truth life, you may enter the "show off" life that attracts attention, even though it's not really who you are. In this stage, people are under the guidance of your Elders. Often people form unions in this state. Third Direction is the direction of strength and faith. We are to have the strength to be faithful to ourselves, others, and the creator.
   Advise students that knowing yourself is a long process and takes time. Inform the class that they will be working on their journey to greater self-awareness in this lesson.

ACQUIRE

2. Hand out the "My Positionality" and "Identity Circle/Wheel" handout created by the LSA Inclusive Teaching Initiative, University of Michigan. According to the creators,
   "The Social Identity Wheel worksheet is an activity that encourages students to identify and reflect on the various ways they identify socially, how those identities become visible or more keenly felt at different times, and how those identities impact the ways others perceive or treat them. The worksheet prompts students to fill in various social identities (such as race, gender, sex, ability disability, sexual orientation, etc.) and further categorize those identities based on which matter most in their self-perception and which matter most in others' perception of them."
   Source: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/wp-content/uploads/sites/355/2018/12/Social-Identity-Wheel-3-2.pdf
   The goal of the activity is for students to explore various aspects of their personal identities. Remind students that identity is deeply embedded in who we are - will evolve but stay with you (and can range from positive or negative experiences).

   Inform students that they do not need to fill out sections of the activity if they do not know the answers or if it makes them uncomfortable. If anything, this activity can teach students new vocabulary words such as "socio-econcomic status" or "sexual orientation".
   Alternatively, teachers may white-out the categories on the worksheets and have students fill in their identities using categories of their choosing.
3. Have students take some time to fill in the worksheets.
   Note: This is a personal activity, and sharing or displaying answers should be **completely voluntary**.

4. Once students have various aspects of their identities filled in, encourage them to answer the following questions in the center of the "Identity Circle Wheel" worksheet.
   a) Identities you think about most often
   b) Identities you think about least often
   c) Your own identities you would like to learn more about
   d) Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself
   e) Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you

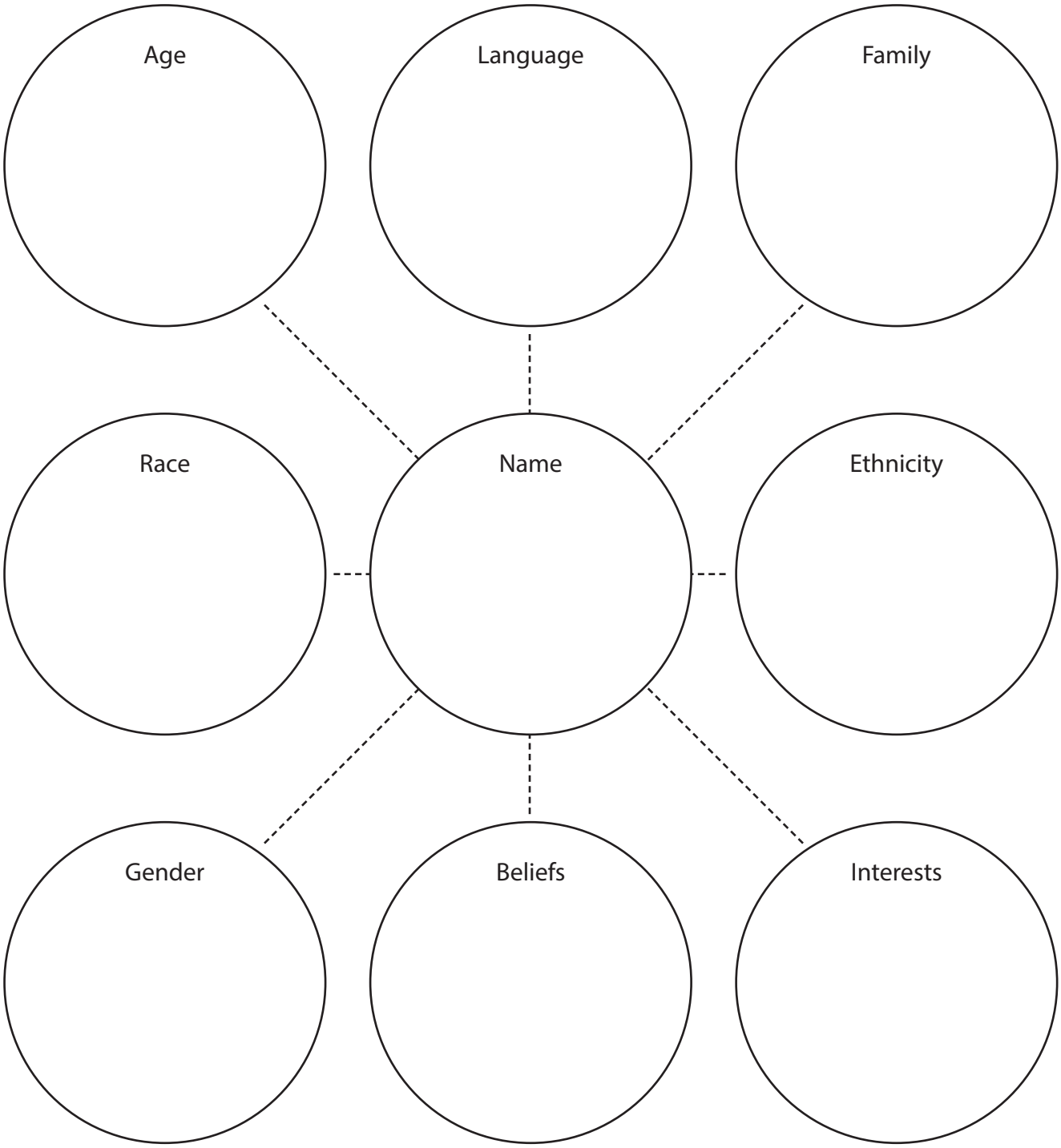
APPLY

5. Now that students have explored their personal identities, inform them that they will be taking time to explore Mary's identity. Through a written response such as a journal entry, students should think critically about the following:
   a) What aspects of Mary's identity did residential schools try to suppress or change the most?
   b) How was Mary's truth stage of life, where she should have been learning about her true identity, impacted by her experience at residential school?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (books, websites, videos etc...):

- Six Historical Thinking Concepts (includes other student tasks that educators can add to for activities or discussion prompts)

MY POSITIONALITY



IDENTITY CIRCLE WHEEL

Adapted for use by the Program on Intergroup Relations and the Spectrum Center, University of Michigan.
Resource hosted by LSA Inclusive Teaching Initiative, University of Michigan (http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/)

FINDING HER WAY

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	2 hours

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will learn about Mary's journey going to school to become a teacher while raising a family. Students will learn about Mary's displacement from her home community and discuss equity issues related to schooling in Canada. Students will apply their learning to their own classrooms and schools, taking an inventory of the equities and inequities that exist. Finally, students will discuss how they can use their agency to create change.

MATERIALS

- Mary's Video "Yearning for Learning"
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5CfVpvTnSA

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- Participation in small group and whole class discussions

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Survey/Inventory research and discussions
- Optional extension project

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Identity, culture, and community in relation to individuals, societies, and nations.
- Identity-sense of self
- Displacement from home community.
- Impacts of colonization related to family dynamics.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Empathy
- Community building
- Visual presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussion

ACTIVATE

1. Begin by showing the class Mary's Story, "Yearning for Learning" where Mary speaks about her journey going to school to become a teacher while raising a family. Students will learn that from an early age, Mary's family recognized this gift in her.
2. After showing the video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5CfVpvTnSA), ask the class the following questions:

   a) How does Mary demonstrate resilience?

   b) What role does family play in Mary's story so far?

   c) Who were Mary's role models and mentors?

ACQUIRE

3. As a class, discuss what it means to fit into mainstream society versus one's own rich cultural background. Sample discussion questions might include:

   a) What does the term "mainstream society" refer to?

   b) What does "culture" refer to?

   c) What are some examples of "mainstream culture" in Canada?

   d) Have you ever felt like you or your culture didn't fit in somewhere?

   e) Do you see your culture reflected in the classroom or school?

4. Have students work in pairs using dictionaries and/or online sources to find relevant definitions for the following terms:

   - Privilege
   - Assimilation
   - Acculturation
   - Agency
   - Equity
   - Equality

APPLY

5. As a classroom, do a survey/inventory of your own school and classroom. Have students co-create the survey questions you will be asking. Examples may include:

   a) What is the percentage of books in the school/classroom written by Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern authors? Which group is underrepresented in your school/classroom library?

b) Look at posters, images, and cultural activities celebrated in the school/classroom. Whose culture is represented most?

6. Once the survey/inventory is complete, discuss the following questions as as class or in partners:
   a) What does it mean to have agency? Discuss their own agency as individuals with the potential to act and make change within their community. *Agency can be understood as having the power to act with a purpose.*
   b) How can young people use their agency to create change?
   c) What changes would you like to see in your classroom or school?
   d) As members of your own school community, what do you think can be done to address the inequities? Possible answers may include contacting the local politicians as a guest speaker.

7. As an extension, use student ideas from questions to create change. Ideas may include planting a heart garden, creating a reconciliation calendar (list of tangible activities schools can engage with towards reconciliation), designing a school circle garden (with the support of Elders and community members), rethinking/redesigning the school or classroom space so it is reflective of the people and local community it is in, and so on.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Courageous/Critical Conversations around Race
- Cornelius Minor
- Start Here, Start Now (Anti-Bias, Anti-racist book) by: Liz Kleinrock

LESSON 11

LIFE AS AN EDUCATOR

GRADE LEVEL
6-12

TIME
2-3 Hours

OVERVIEW
Throughout this lesson, students will explore the concepts of equity and equality as well as the importance of creating pathways to help develop students gifts.

MATERIALS
- Mary's Story: New Path, New Job https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV-3X9AUxlY
- Computers/Laptops and internet access
- New Path, New Job

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)
- Participation in small group and whole class discussions.

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)
- Research and Presentations

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
- Identity-sense of self
- Equity, Equality and Justice

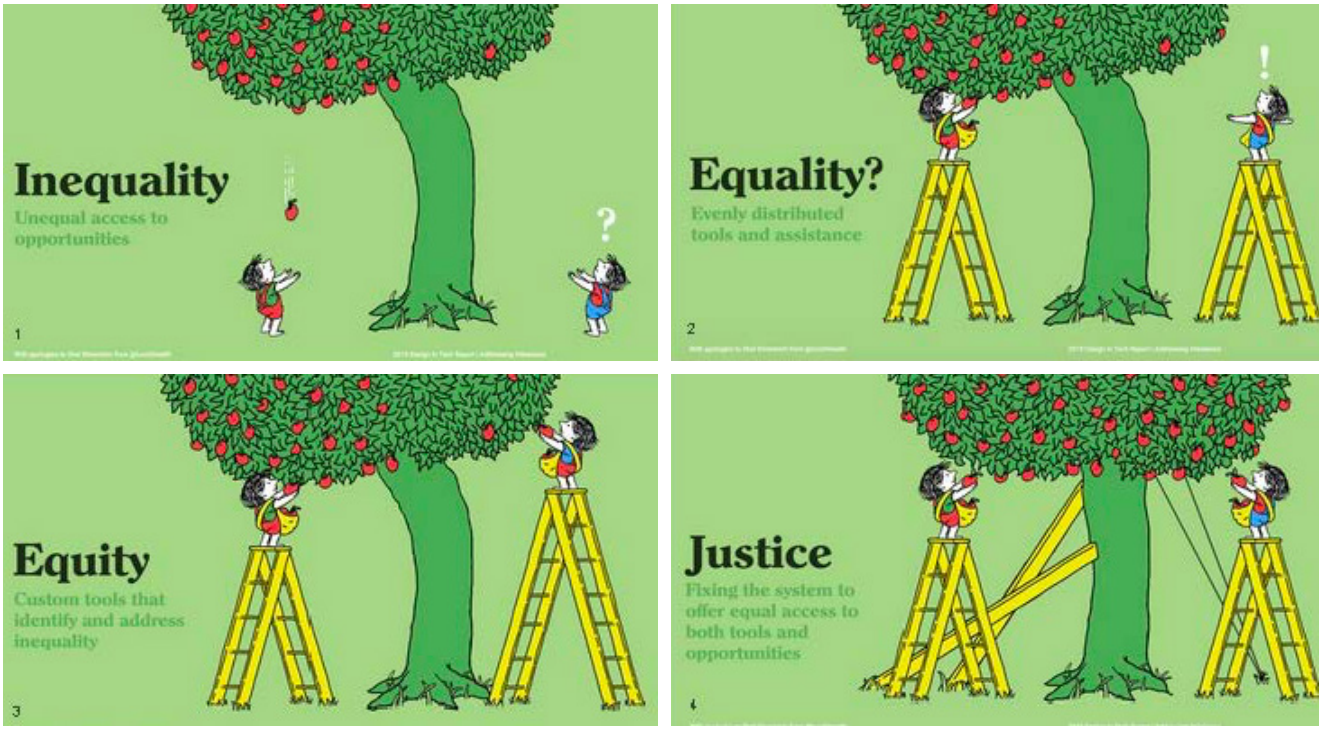
THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS
- Writing
- Critical thinking
- Empathy
- Community building
- Visual presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Begin by showing students "Mary's Story: New Path, New Job" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV-3X9AUxlY) where Mary speaks about her first job as a teacher.
2. In small group or individual written/discussion, ask students to reflect on the following:
   a) Has there been someone who has helped you realize your gifts and potential as a student? What did they do? Was it in an action or words? Why might it be important to have mentors or advocates?

ACQUIRE

3. Show students these images discussing the differences between inequity, equality, equity, and justice. Stop to discuss what students notice in each image before moving on to the next one. Ask students, "Why do equity programs exist and why are they important?". Solicit student answers.



APPLY

4. In groups of 2-3 have students research one of the following equity programs in Manitoba
   - Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre (WASAC) https://www.wasac.ca
   - Red Rising Magazine www.redrising.ca

- Rec N' Read https://indigenoussporthistory.ca/rec-and-read
- University (UW, UM, BU, UCN, USB) Access Programs
- MMF Programs https://www.mmf.mb.ca
- Manitoba Aboriginal Head Start Program https://www.mbaboriginalheadstart.ca

5. Students can share and present their findings through digital platforms such as Google Slides, Cavna, and/or Prezi, ending their presentation by answering the questions "Why is this program important?" and "What inequalities does this program work to address?"

Note to Educators: *Please add to this list based on programs and/or initiatives in your area.*

LEARNING RESOURCES (BOOKS, WEBSITES, VIDEOS ETC...)

- It's Our Time Toolkit
- Red Rising Education - Community Unit
- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

THE FOUR ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO LIVING A GOOD LIFE - MINOPIMATISIWIN

"Education is what got us into this mess — the use of education at least in terms of residential schools — but education is the key to reconciliation,"

"We need to look at the way we are educating children. That's why we say that this is not an Aboriginal problem. It's a Canadian problem."

The Honourable Murray Sinclair

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	2-3 Hours

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will be exposed to the Four Essential Questions as stated by the Honourable Murray Sinclair, while reflecting on these questions personally and in relation to Mary's life and story.

MATERIALS

- Four Essential Questions Worksheet

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- Participation in small group and whole class discussions.

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Participation in small group and whole class discussions.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Identity and sense of self.
- Impacts of colonization related to family dynamics.
- Students will explore the dynamic relationships of people with land, place, and environments.
- Circle of Courage

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical thinking
- Empathy
- Community building
- Visual presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Read the following quote by the Honourable Murray Sinclair: " In order for any society to function properly, it must raise and educate its children so that they can answer what philosophers and Aboriginal Elders, call "the great questions of life." Those questions are : "Where do I come from?", "who am I?", "why am I here?" and "where am I going?"
2. Either in oral discussion or written prompts students can communicate the following:

   1.) What is your reaction to the questions posed?

   2.) Why do you think it is important to know and understand yourself?

ACQUIRE

3. Looking at the 4 Essential Questions Worksheet, discuss in partners or groups Elder Mary's life in relation to each essential question.

APPLY

4. Students work through the four essential questions worksheet.
   Debrief the activity by asking students:

   a) Has this activity helped you answer any of the four questions?

   b) How can this activity help you long-term?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (BOOKS, WEBSITES, VIDEOS ETC…)

- The Inner Work of Racial Justice
- Warrior Kids Podcast

THE FOUR ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS WORKSHEET

Four Essential Questions that lead to "Living a Good Life"	Explanation	How does this connect to Elder Mary's life?	How does this connect to your own life?
Where do I come from?	Understanding my creation story.		
Who am I?	Understanding my connection to the land, my family and community.		
Why am I here?	Understanding my life purpose.		
Where am I going?	Visioning my future direction		

NORTH OVERVIEW ELDER

We end our lessons in the North, the Deciding Life. Once people enter this stage of life, they are older adults, and the decisions they make are theirs. They are encouraged to make their decisions based on the four directions teachings, so that their decisions are kind, have strength, faith, are truthful, caring and sharing.

The fourth direction is kindness, to be kind with ourselves, others, and the creator. This is the Elder's stage, where people will come with tobacco to ask for your help, your direction. The things you are going to teach, must be based in those four directions teachings again - caring, sharing, truthful, strengths, faith and kind. You cannot turn to an Elder anymore, because they are all gone, and it is your time to be the Elder that people come to for advice and guidance. You will tell the next generation, what you learned from the Elders who came before you. Finally, you will reach the doorway, and you will go into the next world.

Mary's family in the 1970's and today

UNMARKED GRAVES

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	1 Hour

OVERVIEW

Throughout this lesson, students will learn about the discovery of unmarked graves at various former residential schools across the country. Students will read and respond to a news article then listen to a young Indigenous artist's songs about hardship and resilience.

Sensitive Topic Warning: *This lesson includes a description of the unmarked graves found at Fort Alexander residential school. There is space in this lesson for students to share their feelings, and teachers are encouraged to support students emotionally while learning about these difficult topics.*

MATERIALS

- Mary's Story Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHuaJ-MnINQ

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- Participation in small group and whole class discussions

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Written or verbal song analysis questions

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Students will explore the concepts of genocide and justice
- The impact of colonization related to how children are valued
- Students will talk about emotions and grief related to the discovery of unmarked graves.

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Empathy
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Either as a whole class or in pairs, have students create a mind map about all the words and ideas that come to mind when they hear the word "Canada".

ACQUIRE

2. Watch "Mary's Story Part 2": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHuaJ-MnINQ
3. Ask students to raise their hand if they've heard of the unmarked graves found at many residential schools across Canada. Ask if anyone would like to share what they know about this.
4. Inform students that after Mary recorded this video "Mary's Story Part 2", news came out that Sagkeeng First Nation found 190 anomalies in the soil at Fort Alexander Residential School. It can be assumed that these are 190 unmarked graves of children who died while attending residential school. https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2040585795640
   a) Ask students to describe how they feel learning this information.
   b) How do they think Mary feels?
5. Next, have students read a news article about the finding of unmarked graves at various residential schools across the country.
6. Inform students that while Indigenous families knew these graves existed, much of the Canadian public did not. It was not until the discovery of 215 unmarked graves belonging to Indigenous children in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation at the former site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School that Canadians started to learn about the number of children who died attending residential schools.
7. Inform the class that Indigenous Peoples across the country are finding ways to heal through all of the pain and grief that is being brought up during this time. One way people heal is through expressing themselves and creating music. In fact, a fifteen year old Indigenous youth from Fall River, Nova Scotia channelled her feelings into her music.

ARTICLE SUGGESTIONS:

"How Thousands of Indigenous Children Vanished in Canada" The New York Times.
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/07/world/canada/mass-graves-residential-schools.html

APPLY

8. After reading the article, ask students to answer the following questions either as a written response, or verbal discussion.
   a) How are you feeling after reading the article?

b) How do you think Indigenous families around the country feel seeing this in the news? How do you think Mary, as a residential school survivor, and her family, as intergenerational survivors, feel?

c) What new information did you learn from reading the article?

d) What actions can be taken to ensure that this never happens again?

9. Play the following songs by DeeDee Austin. Note that the first song has a sad message, while the second has an uplifting one.
   DeeDee Austin - Buried Truth https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpHoCSGLWos
   DeeDee Austin - Buried Truth Part 2 and 3
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVNankkMNnw
10. Additional action activities including creating a heart garden and Project of Heart.
11. Either as a written or verbal response, have students respond to the following questions:

    a) What did you think of the two songs by DeeDee Austin?

    b) How did the first song make you feel? The second?

    c) What was the message of the first song? The second?

    d) Cite some lyrics that resonated with you. Why did they stand out to you?

    e) Which lyrics were about healing? How so?

    f) How did DeeDee Austin fuse both modern musical elements and traditional musical elements? Why do you think she did that?

ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES:

- Residential School History by the National Center for Truth and Reconciliation
  https://nctr.ca/education/teaching-resources/residential-school-history/
- "Reckoning with the truths of unmarked graves of Indigenous children, education systems must take action" article by Lisa Korteweg
  https://academicmatters.ca/reckoning-with-the-truths-of-unmarked-graves-of-indigenous-children-education-systems-must-take-action/

LESSON 14

THE APOLOGY

GRADE LEVEL
6-12

TIME
1 Hour

OVERVIEW
From the 1830s until 1996 the Dominion of Canada had an objective:

"I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone . . . Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill" by Dunacan Campbell Scott

Source: National Archives of Canada, Record Group 10, vol. 6810, file 470-2-3, vol. 7, 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3).

What better way to do this than target the children, strip out of them any sense of self, remove them from their family homes, and try to fill them with a new sense of what it means to be human. Despite the last school closing in 1996, it was only in 2008 when the Government of Canada issued a Statement of Apology. In this lesson, students will analyze the Federal Government's Apology for Residential Schools in 2008 along with the Pope's apology in 2022.

MATERIALS
- "2008 Federal Apology to Residential School Survivors" Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQjnbK6d3oQ
- 2008 Federal Apology Transcript https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1571589171655
- "Pope Francis Apologizes for Residential Schools" Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvxHlFIoi7c
- Pope's Apology Transcript https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/read-the-full-text-of-the-pope-s-apology-for-canada-s-residential-schools-1.5844874
- Mary's Response to the Apologies

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)
- Participation in small group and whole class discussions.

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)
- Verbal article and video comprehension questions

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS
• Identity-sense of self, loss of identity, culture, language. • Connection to Canada (We are all Treaty People) • Reconciliation-shared stories • Students will explore concepts of identity	• Writing • Critical thinking • Empathy • Community building • Inferring • Questioning • Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Begin the class by asking students to create a mind map jotting down all the words that come to mind when they hear "an apology".
2. As a class, discuss "What is an apology" and create a whole-class mind map on the board, based on individual students' maps. Possible discussion questions may include:
   a) Is an apology just saying you are sorry, or is it action-oriented?
   b) Why did the government need to make a public apology to Indigenous peoples and their families impacted by residential schools?
   c) What are the characteristics of a meaningful apology?
3. Either as a whole class, or working in pairs, have students create a meaningful apology checklist (based on their answers to question c). Inform the class that they will be watching two apologies, and using their checklists to determine if the apologies are meaningful or not.

ACQUIRE

4. As a class, hand out the "2008 Federal Apology Transcript" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQjnbK6d3oQ). As students read along, watch the Statement of Apology video (https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1571589171655).
5. Next, ask the class the following questions:
   a) What words/phrases stood out for you and why?
   b) What images stood out for you and why?

c) What questions are you left with after watching the video?

d) Do you think the apology was meaningful and had an impact on the people it was directed towards?

6. Now, inform students that they are going to read and view another apology. This time, the apology is from the Pope (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvxHlFIoi7c) on behalf of the church and was given in 2022. Hand out the "Pope's Apology Transcript"(https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/read-the-full-text-of-the-pope-s-apology-for-canada-s-residential-schools-1.5844874). As students read along, watch the Pope's Apology video.
7. Next, ask the class the following questions:

   a) What words/phrases stood out for you and why?

   b) What images stood out for you and why?

   c) What questions are you left with after watching the video?

   d) Do you think the apology was meaningful and had an impact on the people it was directed towards?

APPLY

8. After reviewing both apologies, allow students (individually or in groups) time to discuss how meaningful each apology was. In particular, students should discuss the following questions:

   a) What parts of the apology seemed sincere?

   b) Which parts of the apology could be improved upon?

   c) Which apology do you think was the most effective and why?

   d) How do you think Mary felt hearing the apologies?

9. Finally, inform the class that they are going to hear from Mary about what she felt and thought while hearing the apologies. **Read and/or share Mary's response.** To debrief, ask the class the following questions:

   a) Were you surprised at how Mary felt? Why or why not?

   b) Was there anything that Mary said that stood out to you? What was it?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (BOOKS, WEBSITES, VIDEOS ETC…)

- "Settlers Take Action" Resource https://oncanadaproject.ca/settlerstakeaction

THE PAPAL APOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM ELDER MARY

In the summer of 2022, I was invited to see and hear the Pope's apology. However, due to several factors out of my control, I couldn't be there in the crowd with other survivors to hear the Pope's apology in person. As I watched and listened from home, I imagined myself there. As the Pope spoke, his words sunk in and I felt a mix of reactions and feelings. When I first heard the news that the Pope had agreed to come to Canada to deliver an apology, I knew in my heart what an important and impactful act this would be, to hear from the head of the largest church in the world. We all know that the acts of the Catholic church and Canadian government were disastrous for all peoples of Turtle Island. The fact that the head of this massive religious institution would be coming to the very place where this all started felt incredibly meaningful and crucial. The Pope's apology in Canada was historic but for many Indigenous people it was not enough, and I understand these sentiments.

Having been one of the survivors who sat in the gallery at the House of Commons listening to the apology from Prime Minister Stephan Harper in 2008, I have to say that the Pope's apology felt more hopeful and genuine in that we are forging a path to move forward. In his apology, the Pope used to the word "genocide" and for me, recognizing what happened to us as a genocide along with coming to Canada to give the apology was the absolute right thing to do.

While the Pope's apology doesn't change what we as Indigenous peoples went through, on a personal level, I truly believe it was a sincere act of acknowledgement and remorse for the treatment we've suffered over the centuries. The question that arose over and over was whether this apology was enough in terms of where we are at now. My personal stance is that in the many years before these apologies, little to nothing was said or acknowledged about what went on and what was done to us as children. So, for me, knowing Pope Francis was coming to Turtle Island for the sole purpose of apologizing on behalf of the largest Christian institution for what they did to generations of Indigenous peoples, it meant a great deal.

Now the entire world knows the horrors that occurred inside residential schools, terrible abuses happened, children died, all in the name of "killing the Indian in the child". This apology allowed our truth to be heard globally and for that reason, I welcomed that apology. It was a step in the right direction but could more be done? Yes! Can and should they do more? Yes! With education, change has started and is continuing. As an educator, I have worked to contribute all that I have learned in my life, which includes all that I have been through. I believe that the Pope's apology gives credence to all the worst that has happened to Indigenous peoples over the centuries. And I must believe that real change will continue to happen, that this apology can and will be useful to recognize and acknowledge the truth of Canada's dark history, and that it will forge a path ahead to foster reconciliation in a good way for all. Mino-Pimatisiwin.

LESSON 15

BLOOD MEMORY

GRADE LEVEL
6-12

TIME
3-4 Hours

OVERVIEW
Throughout this lesson, students will learn about blood memory. Students will hear from members of Mary's family on how they have coped with learning about Mary's trauma, as well as how they feel about the strong legacy Mary has created. Students will then have the opportunity to interview a member of their own family, or someone close to the them and reflect on the experience.

MATERIALS
- "Mary's Family" Video https://www.youtube.com watch?v=gp6_9egIVqY
- Dawn Issacs "Blood Memory" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSxFhBgnI_U
- Student devices (laptops, computers, phones) and internet access
- https://lindagraham-mft.net/trees-the-iconic-metaphors-for-resilience

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)
- Participation in small group and whole class discussions.

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)
- Family Story Reflection

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
- Identity-sense of self, loss of identity, culture, language.
- Connection to Canada (We are all Treaty People)
- Reconciliation-shared stories
- Students will explore concepts of identity
- Students will explore how stressors build up and affect our mental health

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS
- Writing
- Critical thinking
- Community building
- Visual Presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Play the game Kerplunk. Have the students write stressors down on sheets of paper, fold them, and hand them in to you.
2. Read out the stressors and students who can relate to the stressor pull a stick.
3. Talk to the students about how stressors build up and affect our mental health. We need resilience to cope.
4. Have students write about a time in their life when they had to cope with a difficult situation. What helped and hindered you as you overcame this challenge? What learning did you take away that will help you in the future?

ACQUIRE

5. Explain to students that resilience is sometimes described as bouncing back to the way you were before, but that is not exactly right. Instead resilience is learning from difficulties so that you are changed and can cope with similar difficulties in a different way next time.
6. Have students visit https://lindagraham-mft.net/trees-the-iconic-metaphors-for-resilience. Have a dicussion with the students about the trees as images/metaphors for resilience. How have the trees shown their resilience? Which one do you like best? Why?
7. Show Mary's family video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gp6_9egIVqY
   Ask students the following questions:
   a) What what does resilience mean for the Courchene family?
   b) How do they show it?

APPLY

8. Ask the students if they have ever heard of Blood memory
9. Show students the video on "Blood Memory" by Dawn Isaac, Mary's granddaughter. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSxFhBgnI_U
10. Ask students to give examples of blood memory in their lives.
11. Ask students to write about what they have learned or been taught that they want to pass on to the next generation.

Note: *If you want to explore Dawn's connection to Blood Memory further, please see "Blood Memory: Healing from Trauma and Connecting to Resiliency" at the end of this lesson.*

BLOOD MEMORY:
HEALING FROM TRAUMA & CONNECTING TO RESILIENCY

By Dawn Isaac – First Born Grandchild of Mary Courchene

"We're on a journey of remembering who we are as Indigenous people and the gifts that we bring to this world."

~Dr. Raven Sinclair

Storytelling is central to Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Sharing who we are and our connection to family and community builds and strengthens our relationships and encourages reciprocity. The biggest journey we go on is the journey we take within. We walk the sacred circle and face the most difficult parts of our lives and darkest beliefs about ourselves to heal and repair what was taken from us. The journey to healing isn't easy but our Ancestors are always with us. We were their hope just like future generations are our hope. Our journey as a family began by pulling back the veils and having the courage to look inside, to face the ugly, and let the light shine through.

Mary and her daughter Elaine and granddaughters Dawn and Jaimie

For almost 150 years Canada had a dirty little secret called the "Indian Residential School System." Its goal was to "kill the Indian in the child" in a deliberate attempt to "get rid of the Indian problem" through assimilation, ethnocide, and genocide.

On Wednesday June 11, 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, made a Statement of Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, on behalf of the Government of Canada. It began with the statement "The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history." Given Canada's young age of 161 years old, a chapter is quite the understatement. It was a main theme that was woven throughout our story and continues to drive the narrative today. In parliament that historic day sat approximately 100 Residential School Survivors who were given special invitation to bear witness to the apology on behalf of Canada. One of these survivors was my Nana…known to others as Dr. Mary Courchene. She said the energy that day was palpable. While only a handful of Survivors were formally invited, thousands more made the journey to Parliament Hill. As the Prime Minster began his apology, she was transported back in time and saw herself as a five-year old girl. As his words continued she said a movie began to play in her head. A movie so painful, so heartbreaking, so enraging it could bring

tears to even the most hardened of people. She heard sobs and wondered where they were coming from. It took a moment to realize they were coming from her, a sound so foreign she didn't immediately recognize it. Forbidden tears for years suppressed, fell down her cheeks as she remembered the pain and suffering she endured for ten long years of her life. Her willingness to see her own story opened the door to familial healing. It began the journey of three generations working together to explore the sacred space that defines who we are, why we are here, and where we are going.

From Intergenerational Trauma to Intergenerational Healing

"Not every story has a happy ending, but the discoveries of science, the teachings of the heart, and the revelations of the soul all assure us that no human being is ever beyond redemption. The possibility of renewal exists so long as life exists. How to support that possibility in others and in ourselves is the ultimate question."

~Dr. Gabor Maté

Our Ancestors believed that the generations are woven together like a braid. While we all have our own unique recipe of genes that make up our DNA, our genes are passed down from generations past. For thousands of years the threads that connect the generations can be defined as Blood Memory. Every experience that happened to generations passed, both good and bad are passed down to next. Our cells hold the memories, stories, and experiences of our Ancestors. If our Ancestors experience bad things like trauma, that trauma is passed down to the next generation and makes our genes very sensitive to stress. But it also makes our genes sensitive to good things and connects us to our language, the land, ceremonies, and teachings. It is the good feeling that we experience when we are near these things. We may not have explicit memory (things we can recall) of specific things like language or experiences yet when we return home we feel a sense of connection because our BODY remembers…this is blood memory.

Blood memory helps us better understand the concept of Intergenerational trauma. It allows us to recognize when the effects of traumatic experiences are transmitted across generations based on historical trauma and historical unresolved grief. It binds us together, our stories of grief and loss making up our collective narrative. Both my Nana and my mother Elaine are residential school Survivors. For ten long years my Nana was deprived of the love, care, safety, and security of her family and community. She was humiliated, abused, ridiculed, and taught to hate everything about herself and her culture. Her worldview was shaped with the intrinsic belief that Indigenous people were inferior and not worthy enough to be recognized as people as outlined in the Indian Act. It allowed for the insidious nature of shame to take hold and shape identity. It fuels hatred toward herself, her family, her community, her culture. It made her in a sense a "cultural refugee". When Indigenous children left residential schools to return home, their parents didn't recognize them. With the absence of loving guidance of caregivers

and internal wounds to great to share, they didn't know how to be a parent.

My mother Elaine, is the oldest of seven children. She also attended day school at the same residential school my grandparents attended. The early experiences of her childhood were marked by chronic stress and traumatic experience. Often my Nana's partner, she became caregiver and protector of siblings as they navigated the dangers of living with my grandfather who dealt with his pain by drinking. My mom didn't experience safety at school or in the home and had a nervous system that was hyper attuned to stress. Surrounded by lateral violence from her peers, domestic violence in the home, and overt violence in the school, my mom's spirit suffered. When my sister and I were born, she made it her mission to go through therapy to learn how to be a parent but that didn't spare us from experiencing the intergenerational effects of trauma. I grew up not understanding what it meant to be Indigenous. I didn't feel connected to the culture nor did I have any knowledge of my family's history in residential school. I only knew the narratives that surrounded me in the small town where we lived. Racism was rampant. Social beliefs dictated that Indigenous people continued to be seen as less than. Despite the heavy Indigenous population, people hid their identity, preferring to identify as anything other than Indigenous. I was one of those people. I was born to an Indigenous mother and white father. I grew up with the privilege of having light skin that afforded me the ability to deny my heritage. Without any connection to my Indigenous heritage, I developed a shame-based identity. I internalized the oppressive racist beliefs about Indigenous people and hid who I was. The shame imposed on my Nana in her experiences was passed down to my mother and finally to me. It wasn't until many years later when I started working with my mom and my Nana did I finally understand. I heard my Nana and mom's stories of attending the Fort Alexander residential school. I heard how they were taught as small children to hate themselves. I learned that my family carried this pain and trauma likes scars and that their scars were actually my scars as well. I finally saw how my BODY remembered these experiences even though I didn't attend. I learned that I carried this heaviness and spiritual wound with me well into adulthood. I finally learned I was an Intergenerational survivor.

"Find freedom in the context you inherit"

~ Lee Maracle

The way people individually and collectively live and experience the world depends on connection and relationship. By connecting to our ancestor's experiences, we can finally embrace how we are more than the trauma. Colonization is a small part in our collective history. The wisdom and resilience of our Ancestors has also passed down through the generations and shape our ways of knowing and being. Through healing and sharing our stories we can build and honor a sense of belonging and connection to our families and communities. This will forge a way forward and advance transformative change to promote healing, understanding and resilience.

In hearing my Nana and mom's stories of trauma, I also heard their stories of strength and

survival. My Nana made the difficult decision to leave her home community with her seven children in an effort to give them a better life. She enrolled in University and became connected to an Elder who shared traditional teachings. It was through these teachings and in attending ceremony that she remembered the teachings of her father, a great Medicine man. My mom went to university to become a social worker. She learned about trauma, and connected to culture and ceremony as part of her healing journey. Both, dedicating their lives to helping change the narrative and see our people thrive. My Nana brought the Anishinaabe language and history into the classroom and fearlessly shared her story in the public eye. She is rightfully a hero to many, including her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. My mom tirelessly advocated for the rights of Indigenous children in the child welfare system, a job that at times seemed insurmountable. As a therapist she helped others work through their trauma and learn to see the very best in themselves. She shared her gift of insight and human connection to bring hope to others. They both connected our family to ceremony and helped me see my worth as a strong Indigenous women. I realized that my family's survival, strength, and resilience was also my survival, strength, and resilience. My BODY remembered. This is how I came to understand Intergenerational Resilience. This is healing.

Unless a person learns about the forces that shape them, they will never really know themselves or their potential as a human being. This is our sacred responsibility. We must connect to our authentic selves, share our gifts with others, and encourage reciprocity. Our country tried to destroy Indigenous Peoples. They took our land. They stole our children and put them in abusive systems like residential schools and the child welfare system. They continue to approve colonial policies and ignore racism.

BUT STILL WE STAND. We are still here, our voices strong, and our ways of knowing and being remain. We are dismantling the structures that contribute to deadly indifferences, transforming perspectives, building allies, and leading a healing movement.

THIS IS INTERGENERATIONAL HEALING…our bodies remember.

LESSON 16

MINO PIMATISIWIN (THE GOOD LIFE)

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
6-12	4-5 Hours

OVERVIEW

In this final lesson, students will learn from Mary what it means to live "Mino-Pimatisiwin" or "the Good Life". As a culminating project, students will choose to either create an original piece of artwork, poetry, video, song etc. to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation for the "Imagine a Canada" national competition; or create a photovoice project about their identity, a message to Mary, or how this program has influenced them.

MATERIALS

- Mary's Article on Mino-Pimatisiwin from Courchene, M., Robillard, B., Carpenter, A., Halas, J. (2018). Infusing Indigenous Games and Perspectives with HPE. J. Barrett & C. Scaini (Eds.) *Physical and Health Education in Canada* (pp. 61-68).
- "Imagine a Canada Project Description" handout
- Mary's Video: Finding Mino-Pimatisiwin **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvHDcXl497I**
- Jaimie Isaac's Video: "Brings to Light" **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-N0BwHyrOQ**

LEARNING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (ASSESSMENT AS, FOR LEARNING)

- Participation in small group and whole class discussions

STUDENT TASKS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

- Final project (video, poem, song, dance, essay, artwork etc)

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Students will explore the idea of mino pimatisiwin

THINKING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- Writing
- Critical thinking
- Empathy
- Community building
- Visual presentation
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Discussions

ACTIVATE

1. Begin the lesson by distributing and reading Mary's article on Mino-Pimatisiwin. As a class, watch Finding Mino Pimatisiswin - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvHDcXl497I
2. Ask students to summarize the concept of "Mino-Pimatiswin" meaning "The Good Life".
3. Ask students to summarize the teachings from the four directions.
4. As a class, discuss the meaning of reconciliation and connect it to Mary's explanation of Mino-Pimatisiwin and the notion of balance. Ask students the following question:
   a) Why is it important to be balanced as an individual? (note: Refer back to previous lessons and review identity topics)
   b) How does the concept of "Mino-Pimatisiwin" relate to reconciliation?
   c) How do you see yourself engaging with reconciliation?
   d) How can people engage in reconciliation in a good way?

ACQUIRE

5. For final project inspiration show students the work of Mary's grand daughter, Jaimie Isaac. Brings to Light https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bse6227KzTQ
   a) Ask students what did this exhibit communicate?
   b) How did the exhibit share parts of Mary's story?
   c) How did it share parts of Jaimie's story?
   d) And how were the two weaved together?

APPLY

6. Hand out the "Project Description" to each student. Inform students of their final cumulative project, in which they will have the opportunity to "Imagine a Canada" and submit an original piece of artwork, poetry, video, song etc. to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. See the official website for more details: https://nctr.ca/education/educational-programs/imagine-a-canada/
7. Once you review the project description with students, have them fill in the "My Ideas" section on page 2 of the handout.
8. Alternatively, if students do not want to participate in the national competition, have them create a photovoice project using a program such as Canva or Google Slides
   Options for Photovoice could include:

   Option 1: Tell the stories of who they are (refer back to lessons on Identity)
   Option 2: Messages to Elder Mary
   Option 3: What has the project meant to you?
   See the opening clip from the Photovoice project from Empowering the Spirit for more information.
   https://empoweringthespirit.ca/photovoice-project/
9. Celebrate student learning by hosting a whole school event where students and community members can view the class's projects.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES (BOOKS, WEBSITES, VIDEOS ETC...)

- Mary's videos and images (Primary + secondary sources)
- It's Our Time Toolkit
- Red Rising Education - Community Unit
- Photovoice
- New Seven Oaks document of stories from Elder Mary and David Rundle
- Additional lesson plan: Lesson Plan 1.4.2: First Nations Quality of Life (Current topics)

Elder Mary Courchene

Early in my teaching career, many years ago, I sat down with an Elder who explained to me what *Mino' Pimatisiwin* has always meant to our people, the peoples of Turtle Island. And it made perfect sense to me. *Mino' Pimatisiwin* is about balance; it is about living a good life. It is knowing all parts of one's self and finding solace in that knowing. As I listened to the Elder and reflected on all he had to share, it was like the completion of a jigsaw puzzle from the stories that my dad used to tell me before my residential school years. I really understood *Mino' Pimatisiwin* and recognized that the symbolism of the Medicine Wheel teachings provided guidance for how people could intrinsically and communally live a good life. Unfortunately, I was locked into a system that I felt powerless to challenge at that time. It is different now! Indigenous ways and being are now legitimate in our school system and will be included as part of true inclusiveness.

Mino' Pimatisiwin *is about balance; it is about living a good life. It is knowing all parts of one's self and finding solace in that knowing.*

For me, *Mino-Pimatisiwin* means "balance" in all aspects of the body and spirit. As you move through life, you are born and begin in the east, which is *physical*. When you are a little baby, this begins the good life, generally speaking. As you progress, by the time you are a teenager, you are in the south direction, which is *emotional*. In the south direction, the emotional and social are together; they are not apart. It is a time when social interactions are important. Emotions are overflowing as young people enter this important phase of life. Adolescence is a time for illumination, friendship, exploration, and extremism; where we might see a teenager, for adolescents, it is another world for them. They are not yet fully developed cognitively, and it is a period of real growth and development.

The west direction is *intellectual*, also known as mental or cognitive; the west represents adult life. And the north is *spiritual*; it is a time for elders to reflect on their lives, allowing wisdom to manifest. It is a time for sharing, a time for spiritual wisdom to emerge. As one Elder taught me, "Spirituality is your core being." It is always there through the ages. It is your core, and when you reach the north, it should flourish in a time for sharing.

As we move through the Medicine Wheel of life, sometimes we become stuck. If we are hurt by a traumatic occurrence while we are in a certain direction, we can get stuck there even though physically we have progressed. For example, we may still think as a teenager, adopt a narrow perspective, as though our brain has stopped developing, until we do some healing. As Michael Hart (2002) explains, "When individuals are not balanced within, [when they are] disconnected in their relationships, or in disharmony with their environment, change is required. . . . [W]hen an individual attempts to remain in a 'stuck' balanced state, their growth is hindered because the world around them continues to change" (p. 102). Indigenous ways tell us that the issues that hold us back need to be explored, dealt with, and healed. Explore them in depth and you move on quickly.

As we move forward on our reconciliation path, active life and learning are what our teachings are all about; to experience life is medicine along our Medicine Wheel of life. Strive for balance across all directions and you will live the good life.

IMAGINE A CANADA

Project Description

The Imagine a Canada 2022-2023 program invites Canadian youth from K-G12 and CÉGEP to envision a Canada reconciled.

Youth in the K-G5 stream can submit an art piece, essay, or other representation to express their vision of a reconciled Canada and what they hope others will learn from their submission. Twelve projects will be selected from the K-G5 stream to be included in an art booklet showcasing their work and message.

Youth who participate in the G6-G12 and CÉGEP stream can go one step further and submit a plan on how their project will address Reconciliation in their community or school. Projects for consideration include: inviting Survivors, Elders, or Knowledge Keepers to speak at a series of learning events; building a permanent art installation representing Reconciliation at the school; or supporting volunteer work in communities related to Reconciliation. Six projects from the G6-G12 and CÉGEP stream will receive $750, six will receive $1000, and three will receive $1500. Additionally, these projects will also be recognized in an art booklet.

Youth from select projects in both streams will be invited to participate in virtual leadership training exercises. Youth will learn directly from Elders, Survivors, and Knowledge Keepers as well as special guests about how to engage and lead difficult conversations, how to be a Reconciliation leader, how to manage projects, and how and where to secure funds for future projects.

At the end of the school year, a national celebration will be held to honour the twelve projects from the K-G5 stream and fifteen projects from G6-G12 and CÉGEP stream. Youth from the fifteen projects will be expected to give a short presentation of their project and its progress. Furthermore, the youth will engage with select classrooms from across the country to talk about Reconciliation and share their project. They will also be expected to provide a check-in midway and provide a final report as to their project and how the funds were spent.

My Ideas:

Create a mind map to brainstorm some project ideas, based on your learnings throughout this program and your passions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Taking Care/Trauma Informed Resources

Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program

National Indian Residential School Survivor 24 Hour Crisis Line: **1-866-925-4419**

Trauma Informed Practice Information: **http://www.trauma-informed.ca**

Hope for Wellness: http://www.hopeforwellness.ca

Interactive Links/Additional Resource Links:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 94 Calls To Action

Treaty Relations of Manitoba
http://www.trcm.ca/treaties/

Traditional Territory Map locator
http://www.native-land.ca

Interactive Treaty Map
http://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1605796363328/1605796417543

Residential Schools in Canada Interactive Map
http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools-in-canada-interactive-map

CBC archives- Community proximity to former residential schools
http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/beyond-94-residential-school-map/

Canadian Geographic Indigenous People's Atlas of Canada
https://cangeoeducation.ca/en/maps/indigenous-peoples-atlas-of-canada/https://cangeoeducation.ca/en/maps/indigenous-peoples-atlas-of-canada/

Culture and Language Indigenous Place Names
http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/culture_and_language/documents/aboriginal_place_names.pdf

First Nations Caring Society
The Caring Society | First Nations Child & Family Caring Society (fncaringsociety.com)

Starting from the Heart: Going Beyond a Land Acknowledgement
http://etfofnmi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/going-beyond-a-land-acknowledgement-FINAL-VERSION.pdf

M'Lot, Christine "Medicine Wheel and Goal Setting Series"
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1lOLDTJGJk&ab_channel=ChristineM%27Lot

Manitoba Teacher's Society "The Secret Path" Lesson plans & guidelines
https://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2017/04/26/secret-path-lesson-plans/

"The Secret Path"
https://secretpath.ca/

Downie Wenjack Fund
https://downiewenjack.ca/reconciliation-begins-with-you/

"The Witness Blanket"
https://witnessblanket.ca/

"It's Our Time"
https://education.afn.ca/afntoolkit/

"Brings to Light"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-N0BwHyrOQ

"21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act" Bob Joseph

"Residential Schools With the Words and Images of Survivors" Larry Loyie

"Indigenous Peoples' Atlas of Canada" Encyclopedia volumes 1-4

Winnipeg Aboriginal Sports Achievement (WASAC)
http://www.wasac.ca

KYAC
http://www.7oaks.org/programs/myac/pages/default/aspx

Maples Youth Activity Centre (MYAC)
http://www.7oaks.org/programs/myac/pages/default.aspx

Red Rising Magazine
http://www.redrising.ca

Rec N' Read
http://indigenoussporthistory.ca/rec-and-read

Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework (gov.mb.ca)
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/iid/docs/mamàhtawisiwin_en.pdf

Critical/Courageous Conversations on Race: What Your Child is Learning at School and How You Can Help (gov.mb.ca)
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/parents/conversations/full_doc.pdf

University Access Programs

MMF Programs http://www.mmf.mb.ca

Manitoba Aboriginal Head Start Program
https://www.mbaboriginalheadstart.ca

Additional Book Recommendations: Literature on Residential Schools

When We Were Alone
Written by David A. Robertson, Illustrated by Julie Flett. (2016). Portage & Main Press.

Fatty Legs: A True Story
Book by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Not My Girl
Book by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

When I Was Eight
Book by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

The Orange Shirt Story: The True Story of Orange Short Day
Phyllis Webstad

I am Not a Number
Kathy Kacer

Shi-shi-etko
Nicola I. Campbell

The Train
Jodie Callaghan

A Stranger At Home
Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Porcupines and China Dolls
Ribert Arthur Alexie

The Marrow Thieves
Cherie Dimaline

Stolen Words
Melanie Florence

The Journey Forward
Richard Van Camp & Monique Gray Smith

Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story
Written by David A. Robertson, Illustrated by Scott B. Henderson.

Indian Horse
Written by Richard Wagamese. (2012).Douglas & MacIntyre.

Indigenous Writes
Chelsea Vowel

Broken Circle
Theodore Fontaine

Five Little Indians
Michelle Good

Seven Fallen Feathers
Tanya Talaga

In Search of April Raintree
Beatrice Mosionier

One Story One Song
Richard Wagemese

The Education of Augie Merasty
Joseph Auguste Merasty with David Carpenter

Speaking Our Truth
Monique Gray Smith

They Called Me Number One
Bev Sellars

I Lost My Talk & I'm Finding My Talk
Rebecca Thomas

7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga
David Robertson

Amik Loves School
Katherena Vermette

In My Own Mocassins
Helen Knott

The Reason You Walk
Wab Kinew

Betty: The Helen Betty Osborne Story
David Roberston

ARTICLES FROM THE MBTEACHER MAGAZINE

RESISTANCE ON THE GIIMOOCH:

THE LIFE OF MARY COURCHENE

By Anne Bennett, MTS Staff

Resistance on the Giimooch: The Life of Mary Courchene, a comprehensive learning resource that includes sixteen lesson plans and a teacher's guide, launches this month on The Manitoba Teachers' Society website *mbteach.org*. Through storytelling both written and oral, Mary Courchene, Elder in Residence in Seven Oaks School Division, shares her life and how her history, family, culture, language, and ways of knowing preserved her spirit, sharpened her focus, fuelled her determination and led her to the place—and person—she is today.

When asked about the title of the project, Mary says, "It means on the down-low, in secret," with a little laugh, she adds, "We had to hold onto our identity quietly, unseen. It was very risky, but there was power in it."

GIFT OF TRUTH AND THE POWER OF STORIES

It was only near the completion of the project that its title, *Resistance on the Giimooch*, came to Mary.

"When I was about 12, a nun locked me and my best friend in the bathroom so we couldn't go to supper. We were being punished because we didn't pick up the things in the playroom that we were told to. I got my friend to stand on my shoulders and squeeze out the window. She came around and unlocked the door so we could go to supper. When we were eating, the nun saw us and took us back to the playroom. When we got

there, she told us to get back into the bathroom and I said no. She picked up a bat and aimed it at my friend. I thought she was going to kill her, so I ran and grabbed the bat. The nun fell and I unintentionally stepped on her veil, and it came off. I said, "don't do that again", in the language. I didn't think about it, I just knew I had to protect my friend. The nun just sat there on the floor; she was so stunned by it. We went back and ate supper and she never came to punish us again. We sure got away with that one."

STEPPING INTO ROLE OF TEACHER

Throughout her time at Residential School and the years since, Mary has routinely reflected on the intentional acts of genocide against her being and spirit. As an adult, undefeated by the loneliness and devastation of her past and an education system determined to destroy her, Mary would step into the role of a teacher. She recognized that one of the ways she could change a school system that attempted to erase who she was as an Indigenous person was to disrupt it from within.

"In the early 70s, I found out there was a new program starting at Brandon University. And I thought, wow, there's an opportunity for me. I lived on the reserve, but I wasn't going to leave my kids. So I wrote a letter to the university about my life in the Residential School and why I wanted to leave the reserve to take this program. I felt it was an opportunity to do something for me and for my children. I basically wrote an autobiography. And based on that, they wrote me back and said I was accepted. The only problem was they wanted me for an orientation the very next weekend. I had very little money, with seven kids from ages three months to 13 years old, and I thought "What am I going to do, how can I get to Brandon with my kids?" Then I thought of a plan, once again on the Giimooch. I decided to borrow my husband's car, and I say my husband's car because back then you were subservient to your husband. I couldn't just ask him if

"I CAN SEE THE CHANGES OVER THE YEARS, OVER THE GENERATIONS. I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THAT THE THIRD GENERATION, MY GRANDCHILDREN, THEY'RE ANGRY. THEY'RE MAD AT THE WORLD FOR THE WAY THEIR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS WERE TREATED, AND THEY ARE STRONG IN CLAIMING BACK WHAT WAS DENIED THEM. AND I UNDERSTAND THAT. BUT WITH THE FOURTH GENERATION, MY GREAT GRANDCHILDREN, IT IS ALREADY DIFFERENT AND THAT FILLS MY SOUL. THEY ARE JOYFUL AND HAPPY BEING WHO THEY ARE, AND THEY EMBRACE THE LANGUAGE, THEY EMBRACE THE CULTURE. I AM A HOPEFUL PERSON, AND MY HOPE IS WITH THE LITTLE ONES. THEY ARE THE HEALERS."

I could go because he would have said no, and I would've listened as he was the authority. So, I told him I wanted to go to bingo, and he gave me a bit of money for it, which I used for gas. I didn't even have a driver's license, but that was beside the point. I drove my husband to work, went back to the house and packed up the kids. We put our stuff in garbage bags and took off. I wrote my husband a note and told him "I'm going to School in Brandon, I'll talk to you later, love Mary". That's all I said. We went to Brandon and showed up at my brother's place because I had nowhere else to go, and he let us stay. When my husband found the note, he got someone to drive him to Brandon to find us. He had quit his job on the reserve and followed us out there. He understood. He knew it was so we could have a better life, so our children could have a better life."

"WE ARE SORRY"

Fast forward to June 11, 2008. Mary sat in Ottawa in the gallery of the House of Commons as then Prime Minister Stephen Harper read a statement of apology to survivors of Indian Residential Schools in Canada.

"The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly," he said. "Nous le regrettons. We are sorry. Nimitataynan. Niminchinowesamin. Mamiattugut."

As the apology was read, Courchene began to sob. "My first instinct was to feel shame that I was showing emotion. But when I looked around, I saw other survivors openly crying, too. It was a moment of finally hearing the government say yes, you're right, this happened, you were wronged. And we did this to you."

Events such as the apologies by the Canadian prime minister and more recently the pope were particularly searing for Mary, as she felt her childhood experiences were being unpacked on varying levels—the impact on herself, and in the broader Canadian context.

Mary's goal in sharing her story far and wide has always been in the name of a better future for Indigenous children and youth. Despite the genocide of Indigenous people, their culture, rights, language, and ways of knowing and being, despite the pain and suffering that have spanned generations, with *Resistance on the Giimooch*, Mary and

Elder Mary Courchene and her fourth generation grandchildren Sacha, Niko, James and Ava (L to R)

her family have both re-claimed and shared their power. The power to be, to heal, and through education, to change the course of history.

THE HEALERS WILL PREVAIL

"I can see the changes over the years, over the generations," she says. "There is my generation, my children's generation, the third generation of my grandchildren and now their children, the fourth generation, my great grandchildren, who are the young people now. I can't help but notice that the third generation, my grandchildren, they're angry. They're mad at the world for the way their parents and grandparents were treated, and they are strong in claiming back what was denied them. And I understand that. But with the fourth generation, my great grandchildren, it is already different and that fills my soul. They are joyful and happy being who they are, and they embrace the language, they embrace the culture. I am a hopeful person, and my hope is with the little ones. They are the healers."

Mary concludes that it is the healers who will prevail, the healers who have heard the voices that cannot speak and will pass along hope to future generations.

DEDICATED TO THE YOUNG ONES

"*Resistance on the Giimooch: The Life of Mary Courchene*," is dedicated to both the young ones who endured Canada's Residential Schools through quiet, unseen, courageous moments of resistance and to the young ones today who will resist in plain sight. In their joyful defiance, they will help create a better life for themselves and generations to come.

MARY:
A SURVIVOR'S STORY

At the age of five, Mary Courchene was forced to attend Fort Alexander Residential School in what is now Sagkeeng First Nation. Despite the School being within walking distance from her family home, Mary had to observe her parents and younger siblings' day-to-day lives from a short distance. Like looking through a keyhole at a family life that she longed to be a part of, Mary watched from a third-floor windowsill of the Residential School ten months of the year, for ten long years.

Mary was one of over 150,000 children forced into the Residential Schools in Canada. From the time she arrived until she was 16 years old, Mary's life revolved around the ways of the Residential School system. She was compelled to abandon all that she knew, all that made her who she was. And while Residential Schools may have been known in settler communities as places of learning, the lessons taught "were riddled with shame, devastation, and unimaginable trauma," she says. "These are lessons I have spent my whole life trying to make sense of."

In 2018/19, Elder Mary, her daughter Sherri Denysuik, director, Adult Education Centre and Indigenous Inclusion, and Sarah Gazan, a staff officer in the MTS Professional and French Language Services department, began a collaboration between The Manitoba Teachers' Society and Seven Oaks School Division.

The intent: Come together to create an Indian Residential School curriculum centered around Mary's story—how her time at Fort Alexander had shaped her life and family. The result: *Resistance on the Giimooch*, a comprehensive, multi-platform project that captures Elder Mary's early years, her time at Residential School and the impact of that experience not only on her own life, but the lives of her children and grandchildren as well.

IT TAKES A TEAM

The process included collaboration with an extensive team of educators. Taking on various roles within curriculum development, the team of educators listened to Mary's stories, briefly and methodically stepping into her lived experiences in an effort to distill her learning into teaching tools with the power to change the course of history. Five years after that work began, *Resistance on the Giimooch* was born.

"This project has been a long journey that's been challenging, emotional, so very personal and fulfilling," says Denysuik. "We began by recording Elder Mary's stories and the recorded interviews with two of her children and two of her grandchildren to share their stories as 2nd and 3rd generation Residential School survivors."

As both Elder Mary's daughter and an educator, Denysuik's investment was multi-layered and intensely personal. For her, the power and potential of both perspectives gave *Resistance on the Giimooch* a weight and significance unlike anything else.

"I had a dual role with the project," she says. "The first as daughter of Elder Mary, and the second as project lead. This meant I was deeply connected on both a personal and professional level. It's been a huge honour and a gift to be working so closely with my mom on this project and especially in all her years as Elder in Residence for Seven Oaks. I can remember as a child thinking my mom is the greatest storyteller in the world, and as an adult this perspective has not changed."

"I am so grateful to every single person who was part of this journey and were dedicated to this special project," Denysuik continues. "And I am especially grateful to them for honouring and holding Elder Mary's story close to their hearts."

POWERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO CHAMPION TRUTH

Today's teachers have a powerful opportunity to champion the truth. They are positioned, perhaps better than anyone else, to create fundamental and enduring change.

Both Mary and her daughter recognize that this is one story of thousands that is being shared. Collectively as we unpack the truths of Residential Schools, we must remember the stories that were never given voice, and those that have yet to be heard.

In Mary's words: "Those deceased who were never given the voice they so deserved—for them, for myself, for my grandchildren, great grandchildren, and for our collective whole, I share these stories. In an act of both truth and reconciliation, I bring voice to the stories that have been woven into the person I am today. A person who I have been working to reclaim for as far back as I can remember."

Elder Mary Courchene and her daughter Sherri Denysuik

NANA:
THE GRANDCHILDREN'S STORY

The best and brightest reflection of Mary's legacy is without a doubt her grandchildren. Growing up, the young people learned much as they observed her way of being. And while each has their own perspective on her life, their stories of Nana contain similar threads, woven together in a portrait glowing with admiration and the resolve to continue her work.

Here, three of Mary's grandchildren reflect on her life and the impact it has had on their family.

JONATHAN

Jonathan Courchene is Mary's grandson. As a child, he spent almost every weekend at his Nana and Grandpa's home, watching in awe as his grandmother cared for her family and community and still found time to sit at the kitchen table, late into the night, focused on her reading and studies. Today Jonathan works as a student support facilitator at the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and recognizes now that her discipline was and is rooted in her belief in lifelong learning.

"Learning is her passion; she loves it. And when you love something, you give it all of yourself through your presence, just like she has done her whole life."

Young people owe Mary a debt of thanks, he says, for the priority she placed on learning and the sacrifices she made to continue doing it. "Her life's work means brighter tomorrows for so many First Nations children and youth across our province and country. Her hardships and struggles have turned into their comforts and securities."

JAIMIE

Jaimie Isaac, Mary's granddaughter, is an interdisciplinary artist and chief curator at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Jaimie's vision of her grandmother's life and work is shaped by storytelling and Mary's deep connection to those who have come before.

> **"NANA HAS INSTILLED IN ME A STRONG SENSE OF PRIDE IN MY IDENTITY AS AN ANISHINAABE KWE AND HAS GIVEN ME THE LOVE AND PASSION OF ANISHINAABEMOWIN. IT IS WITH HER IN MIND THAT I AM LEARNING OUR LANGUAGE TO TAKE BACK WHAT WE WERE DENIED. HER LIFE'S WORK, THAT SHE IS GRACIOUSLY SHARING WITH US, IS AN IMPORTANT TRUTH WE ALL MUST LISTEN TO AND LEARN FROM.**

"Nana's work as an educator, as a knowledge keeper and storyteller exist because of her courage, resilience and survival," says Jaimie. "Her personal perseverance, power and will were developed through necessity. She shares with us the collective power and beautiful resistance of our ancestors."

It is this power, combined with the support of Mary's children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, that fuels the hope of generational healing gifted to us through the stories of survivors like Mary.

"She has worked for a cultural resurgence that we as her family must carry forward," says Jaimie. "I learn from Nana every day and aspire to follow in her footsteps. She empowers all of us to be the best we can be."

ALYSSA

Granddaughter Alyssa Denysuik is also following a path towards a career in education. She is enrolled in the Community Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) at the University of Winnipeg and will begin teaching in 2024. Alyssa credits Mary, her family's "brave, sharp-minded matriarch", for the connection she feels to her culture and history.

"She has instilled in me a strong sense of pride in my identity as an Anishinaabe kwe and has given me the love and passion of Anishinaabemowin. It is with her in mind that I am learning our language to take back what we were denied. Her life's work, that she is graciously sharing with us, is an important truth we all must listen to and learn from."

Elder Mary Courchene has 7 children, 18 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren (Here she is with 2 of her daughters and their families)

Each of Mary's grandchildren speak to their hope that *Resistance on the Giimooch* leads teachers and students alike towards the truth and a deeper understanding of the legacy and ongoing impact of Residential Schools.

Teachers have a unique opportunity to share the truth with students, says Jaimie, so that "they carry forth these teachings and stories with care. Educational reform will redress a history of harmful education, so that generations of the future aren't bereft of important cultural knowledge that Elders like Nana have fought to protect, revive and share. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action should be the guiding principles and values that instill change and nourish ways of being and learning."

"My hope is that the judgement and criticism against our people, harboured in the minds of yesterday, slowly fades away," says Jonathan. "The students who grow up in times of truth and reconciliation can nurture kinder and more understanding hearts so the relationships with our relatives can heal. Healing cannot take place until the truth is told and accepted."

Alyssa agrees.

"I hope that educators and students will see the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and learning in both historical and contemporary contexts. We all have a responsibility to one another through the teachings of mino pimatisiwin—living the good life. Through my grandmother's gift of these truths, we are better equipped to live in harmony with the teachings of the good life that she has generously shared with us."

TEACHERS AS LEARNERS:
A TEAM'S STORY

Imagine you are approached with an opportunity: Take the life story of Residential School survivor Mary Courchene, and create a learning resource reflective of truth, founded in resistance and connected to a hope for Canada rooted in meaningful reconciliation. No small task.

Unfazed by the overwhelming responsibility, a team of Manitoba teachers took up the challenge, aware of the incredible opportunity to create positive, lasting change.

From 2018/19 till today the following educators were part of a team who created the educational resource, *Resistance on the Giimooch*: Alyssa Denysuik, Amy Carpenter, Christine M'Lot, Hayden LaRiviere, Janelle Prairie, Jenna Firth, Jonathan Traverse, Melissa Neapew, Niki Simard, Sarah Gazan, Sheri Ingram, Sherri Denysuik, Sopear Chhin, Stephanie Luna, Tanya Muswagon, Teri McKay, and Wendy Coveney.

"They recognized that in creating this curriculum they would pave the way for settler teachers to invite students into the story of Canada's history and the impact of colonization on the peoples of Turtle Island," Sherri Denysuik says. "Their contributions rose from their hearts and minds, evidence of a strong commitment to honouring the voices of Residential School survivors and providing authentic resources for teachers to guide students in a kind and good way."

Working collaboratively, guided by traditional teachings and inspired by Mary's life and example, the educators wove her experiences and message into 16 lesson plans and a teacher's guide that:

- honour the truth of those who attended Residential Schools;
- prompt thoughtful examination of those experiences and their ongoing impact, and;
- motivate teachers and students alike to make fundamental changes necessary for real, enduring reconciliation to occur.

Sopear Chhin, Janelle Prairie, Elder Mary Courchene, Sherri Denysuik, Sarah Gazan and Amy Carpenter (L to R)

AN MTS AND SEVEN OAKS COLLABORATION

This project was inspired by a model originally conceived by Gail Stromquists at the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. Sarah Gazan, a staff officer in the MTS Professional and French Language Services department, approached Courchene's daughter, Sherri Denysuik, director, Adult Education Centre and Indigenous Inclusion, with a proposal; a collaboration between MTS and Seven Oaks School Division to create an Indian Residential School curriculum around her mother's story. Gazan was inspired by the work begun with BCTF and saw the opportunity to develop the project further. Together, they built the team that would create *Resistance on the Giimooch*.

"Gail's work at BCTF taught about generosity, about story, about commitment and about the love that carries us through even the darkest times," says Gazan. "Mary's story is one of trauma but also of resistance, healing, and love. She has carried her Residential School story and has also continued to carry the Anishinaabe language and her teachings. That is her strength and the strength of our people."

Each of the teachers who shared reflections on the experience, pointed out the personal growth they felt bringing Resistance on the Giimooch to life.

For Amy Carpenter, a teacher of 19 years currently pursuing her Ph.D., the process drew on her history with the Courchene family, permitting an even richer relationship with Mary's story.

"To be part of this project helped me see the power of healing, remembering and resurgence through the power of story. It helped me to be a better listener and to ponder stories on a deeper level."

Amy Carpenter adds, "I want to see educators and students delve into the oppressive, violent and intentional actions on the part of the colonial Canadian government. I hope this project will help students better understand the intricate and collective impact Residential Schools have had on this place we call home. I hope it will help students not only understand Mary's story, but also their own."

Mary Courchene's story resonated deeply with Sopear Chhin, a teacher at Seven Oaks Middle School and the only member of the teacher team who is not Indigenous.

"Whether you're Indigenous or not," says Chhin, "the lessons are approachable and helpful in allowing classes to make connections with the histories of our past in order to make sense of our current world. It has reminded me to listen with an open, courageous heart and not shy away from using my own voice."

The intention of the curricular resource is to provide educators with the opportunity to delve deeply into the stories of truth that surround the impacts of residential schools. The hope is classrooms will engage in multiple lessons over a period of time, versus a one-day event to honour Orange Shirt Day.

CANADA'S TRUE HISTORY

"This is a part of Canada's history that many of us did not learn about in school," says Janelle Prairie, a graduate of the Community Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) and vice principal at École Belmont. "Through the stories and voices of Elder Mary and her family, my hope is that school communities meaningfully engage in truth and reconciliation while they learn about Canada's true history. This is an opportunity for students to share what they learn and inform other generations, building on our collective healing."

Curriculum editor Christine M'Lot, a teacher at the University of Winnipeg Collegiate shared that, "As educators we need to understand that truth has to come before reconciliation. That means listening to the stories and learning the truth about what happened at Residential Schools, the intergenerational trauma that followed and the historical and ongoing effects of settler colonialism."

Tanya Muswagon, a teacher at Elwick Community School, says that while Mary's life was uniquely hers, her story illustrates the commonalities fundamental to a just and caring society. "This is a way for students to learn about forgiveness, kindness and empathy. We are here to teach our kids to be good to themselves and one another."

M'Lot adds that the teacher's guide is a key facet of *Resistance on the Giimooch*. Following the Anishinaabe teachings of the Four Directions, the guide is informed by learnings from Knowledge Keeper Sherry Copenace and a summary by Elder Dan Thomas.

"It assists teachers to understand the importance of the directions and how Mary's life journey has taken her through the stages of life—childhood, adolescence, adulthood and now Elderhood."

This project has been a work of heart for everyone involved. At times the work was heavy, at other times it was joyous and at all times there was a sense of responsibility to honour survivors who fought with their lives to resist acts of genocide against all aspects of their being.

"The lives of survivors are complicated," says Gazan. "The injustices of the Residential Schools, the dark history and the legacy of this country are perpetuated through our child welfare and education systems. I hope students will fight for justice, for truth and for equity and against oppression and racism, and I am forever thankful to Mary, her family and the teachers involved for all they have shared and given of themselves to make this project a reality." T

LESSON PLANS: THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

EAST

Lesson 1: Mino Pimatisiwin (The Good Life)
Lesson 2: Land, Language, and Identity
Lesson 3: "The Best Years of my Life"
Lesson 4: Stages of Life

SOUTH

Lesson 5: Displacement
Lesson 6: Fear
Lesson 7: Residential Schools, Thousands of Stories
Lesson 8: History of Education and Schools

WEST

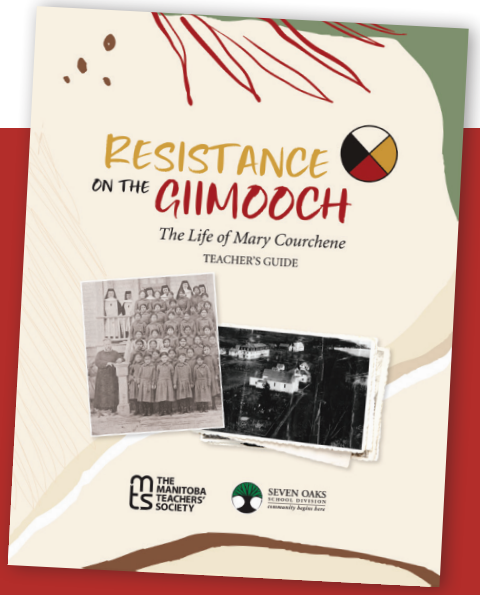
Lesson 9: Who am I?
Lesson 10: Finding Her Way
Lesson 11: Life as an Educator
Lesson 12: The Four Essential Questions

NORTH

Lesson 13: Blood Memory
Lesson 14: Unmarked Graves
Lesson 15: The Apology and Reconciliation
Lesson 16: Mino Pimatisiwin (The Good Life)

HOLDING SPACE

Some topics in this resource will be difficult to learn about. It is important to create a safe learning environment that holds space for all experiences and emotions. Teachers are encouraged to engage with students from a Trauma-Informed perspective. For more information on Trauma-Informed practice visit the Manitoba Trauma Information and Education Centre at ***trauma-informed.ca***



For *Resistance on the Giimooch* lesson plans visit ***mbteach.org*** or scan the QR code.

NOTES

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THE
MANITOBA
TEACHERS'
SOCIETY
SEVEN OAKS
SCHOOL DIVISION
community begins here