

# Truth, Reconciliation & Equity: *They Matter to Us!*

## KAIROS CAMPAIGN 2011-12

### *Making it Matter: A Workshop* *Finding our Place in the Circle: Ecumenical Worship Service*



Photo credit: Renaude Grégoire

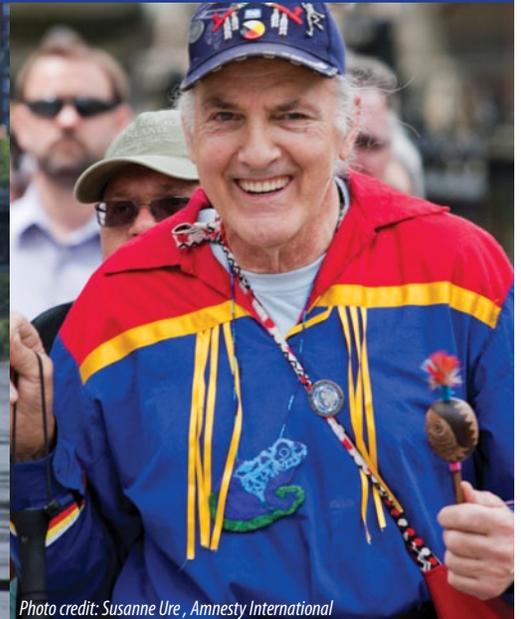


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Photo credit: Jennifer Henry

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# MAKING IT MATTER: A WORKSHOP

## *Truth, Reconciliation & Equity: They Matter to Us!* KAIROS Campaign 2011-2012



Photo credit: Inuit children of Kuujuaq, QC by Jeff Creamer

### **MAKING IT MATTER: A workshop on Truth, Reconciliation and Equity**

(2.5 hours)

#### **Goals:**

- To acknowledge the injustices of the past as reflected in the Truth and Reconciliation process.
- To reflect on the inequities that continue to exist for Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- To learn the difference between equality and equity.
- To explore how the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides a framework for addressing inequity.
- To express a commitment to work towards right relations through truth, reconciliation and equity by stating “they matter to us!”

#### **Background Information for the Facilitator:**

The workshop “Making it Matter” is dedicated to real and viable implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Through the 2008 Apology to the former students of Indian Residential Schools and the launch of the Truth and Reconciliation process, Canadians began a journey with our Indigenous brothers and sisters to address the injustices of the past. With the endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010, the Government of Canada committed our country to working towards a more equitable future. This workshop invites Canadians to put themselves in the picture—to commit to act for truth, reconciliation and equity.

Most of us know something about residential schools. Funded by the government and run by the churches, the schools were part of a formalized campaign to “take the Indian out of the

**For a full-day workshop,  
consider the following  
schedule:**

**9:00-9:30**

Welcome and introductions

**9:30-12:00**

The Blanket Exercise. An interactive learning experience about the history of European colonization and the impact on the First Peoples of Canada.

**1:00-1:45**

UNDRIPardy game show. An online quiz show designed to give an introduction to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

**2:00-4:30**

Making it Matter workshop. A workshop designed to educate participants about the true meaning of equity and how it applies to the implementation of the UNDRIP.

**4:30-5:00**

Evaluation and further action planning/Banner making

**For Full-Day workshop you will  
need the additional materials:**

“The Blanket Exercise” (available in the book *In Peace and Friendship*, 2nd edition, from KAIROS)

UNDRIPardy game show available online and for download here:  
[www.kairoscanada.org/en/take-action/the-land-our-life/the-land-our-life-resources/](http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/take-action/the-land-our-life/the-land-our-life-resources/)

Banner making instructions:  
[www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/TakeAction/11-01-RollWithTheDeclaration-Banner.pdf](http://www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/TakeAction/11-01-RollWithTheDeclaration-Banner.pdf)

child." The survivors of the schools were taken from their homes and families and stripped of their languages and cultures. Many were abused, and some never returned home. The Truth and Reconciliation process began on June 11, 2008, when the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Canadian Government, issued a formal apology in the House of Commons. The process has as its mandate to seek the truth of what happened in residential schools (through records and testimonials) and to educate Canadian people of our true history and the implications of residential schools, both in the past and present. It is a process that requires us all to participate: not simply to stand on the sidelines, but to tell and hear the truth and to act for reconciliation. It is a process for all Canadians to reclaim and rebuild a just nation.

While we must address the past injustices that have been committed against First Nations peoples, we must also look at the current inequities in order to not repeat history. Although Canada consistently ranks as one of the world's best countries to live in, when the same criteria are applied to Indigenous peoples, Canada falls to around 60th place. We need to address this gap so that we do not have to apologize again. The Canadian government's apology will mean so much more if Canadians end the cycle of inequity that Indigenous peoples face in education, health care and social services. Our responsibility is to work towards real reconciliation that takes into account both past and present injustices and translates into learning and change.

When the Government of Canada endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010, it took a big step towards change. But words must now be turned into action. We, not only Government but all Canadians, must meaningfully implement the UN Declaration in ways that bring equity and justice for Indigenous Peoples. Just as in the Truth and Reconciliation Process, we must put ourselves into the picture. Make it clear with our

governments that Truth Reconciliation and Equity matter to us! Justice and equity of Indigenous neighbours is a matter for all Canadians. The integrity of our country depends on it.

### **Materials:**

- An empty picture frame
- 1 UNDRIP booklet for each participant (free from the KAIROS National Offices upon request, please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery). You can also download and photocopy it from: <http://tinyurl.com/5okbd7>
- Print out of inequity cards (pp 5–7) Make sure you separate the issues from the answers
- Large sheets of chart paper (1 for each group)
- 4-6 colours of markers (2 of each colour)
- 1 campaign flyer for each participant. You can download and photocopy it from the KAIROS website here: [www.kairoscanada.org/take-action/truth-equity-reconciliation/](http://www.kairoscanada.org/take-action/truth-equity-reconciliation/)
- Sign making supplies for Part 5 (a camera, cardboard or thick paper, scissors, paint, markers, glue, other materials)

*Optional:* a drum or bell to sound the changing of stations and coming back together of the group

### **Set-Up:**

Depending on the size of the group and the space you are using, set up a maximum of 6 stations each with a table and chairs, preferably with enough space for quiet discussion. Ideally, there will be 3-5 people at each station. At each table place the following materials: a large sheet of chart paper, UNDRIP booklets, one printed inequity card.

### **PART 1: Picture it!** (20 minutes)

Welcome the group. Introduce yourself and invite others to introduce themselves. Consider using the suggested opening prayer to begin. Identify the territory on which the workshop is taking place, giving thanks for all that is in the territory and for its original and current inhabitants. Begin

by sharing an assumption that we are gathered as people of faith or conscience because we believe the past injustice and current inequities facing Aboriginal peoples in Canada must change.

Acknowledge that in our minds, we likely have many pictures, historic or from the front pages of the latest newspaper, of all that is wrong in Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples. Invite people to begin with a moment of silence where you picture the future of equity and justice that we seek. Hold up the picture frame and invite people to 'Picture it'. What would truth, reconciliation and equity for Indigenous peoples in Canada look like? What would just right relationship look like? Invite people to move beyond abstractions and describe for themselves a picture of an equitable and just Canada. Give people a few minutes with their thoughts. Then, invite them to turn to the person beside them and share the picture they drew or the photo snapshot they took in their mind's eye. *(If you have a longer period you might offer the materials and time so that people could actually draw and share their picture.)*

### **Opening Prayer:**

*God of all people, Great Spirit, Holy One, listen to our prayer.*

*Give your blessing this day to the Indigenous peoples of this land. Guide their (our) elders and give them strength; comfort and renew their (our) men and women in times of sorrow and despair; give grace and pride to their (our) children as the daughters and sons of your creation.*

*Hear our prayer for those who gather today to learn the true story of the Indigenous peoples of this country. Give us a sense of justice, an awareness of new beginnings, that wrongs may be redressed, broken promises forgiven, and new covenants forged. May those who have used the land with little thought or regard learn to love and respect this gracious heritage; may those who find your presence in the land be free to model its grateful use to all, that in common life and common dignity, different people may receive from you a new humanity. Amen*

## **PART 2:** **Setting the Context**

(10 minutes)

Summarize the material presented in “Background Information for the Facilitator.” Explain that today we will be strengthening our capacity to be active participants in both recognizing injustice of the past, and addressing the inequities of the present. After all, truth, reconciliation and equity matter to us!

## **PART 3:** **Equity**

(20 minutes)

We begin the workshop with a short exercise that looks at the concept of equity and the difference between equity and equality. As justice seekers, we often look for “fairness” or “equality” when we speak out on issues of human rights and ecological justice. This can be particularly true when referring to resources; their acquisition, distribution, allocation, and so on. So what really is equity? Why equity and not equality, particularly when speaking about Indigenous rights?

### **Interactive Exercise:**

Have participants sit in a circle. Each participant is asked to remove their right shoe and hand it to the person on their right. Then ask each participant to put on the shoe they were given. As they are trying to make it “fit” ask participants: “what’s the problem?” Weren’t they all given a shoe to replace the one they gave away? Wasn’t each person given the same item, a shoe? Explain how equity, or filling ones needs, is not necessarily about giving each person the exact same thing. Equity is about people getting the “shoe that fits.” Otherwise, the shoe is of little or no use. As a group, discuss the following question: Why is it important to understand equity when working towards reconciliation and right relations with Indigenous peoples?

*This exercise was adapted from: <http://laradavid.blogspot.com/2008/07/difference-between-equity-and-equality.html>*

## **Jordan’s Principle:**

Jordan River Anderson of Norway House Cree Nation died in the hospital at age 5 despite having been able to move to home care at age two. The reason he was never able to go home was that different levels of government could not agree on who would pay for Jordan’s home care. Jordan’s Principle sets out that no child should be caught in the middle of a dispute over funding. Rather, the government of first contact would be responsible for initial payments that are in the best interest of the child. Disputes over reimbursement can be

worked out separately between governments and not affect the care of the child.

The following UNDRIP article is a good example of where we find entrenchment of Jordan’s Principle. Article 24(2) “Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right”.

*For more information on Jordan’s Principle:*  
<http://www.fnfcfs.com/jordans-principle>

## **Part 4:** **DRIPtectives**

(1 hour)

*Please refer to set-up instructions on page 3*

Now that the group has had a chance to look at what equity means, the following activity takes a deeper look at the inequities faced by many Indigenous communities today. These are not injustices of the past, but rather the current manifestation of years of oppression against the First Peoples in Canada. We will surface these inequities and look for ways that the UN Declaration can move us closer to right relations with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Divide the participants into groups of 3-5 people (depending on the number of workshop participants and the number of stations you have set up). Give each group a different colour of marker so that they are able to identify their groups responses for the whole group discussion that follows at the end of the exercise.

Explain to participants that each group will have 15 minutes at each station to complete the following:

- Read the inequity card out loud, or if appropriate pass it around, so that all members of the group have had a chance to read or hear it.

- Have group “DRIPtectives” search through the UN Declaration and choose 1 or 2 articles that they feel best apply to the inequity. For younger groups, or in cases where you feel people may need some assistance, consider providing the possible answers to the participants. Possible answers are provided as cut-offs on the cards on pp 5-7.
- Jot down one or two brief ideas about what implementation in that specific context might look like. Ask participants to consider the following in their discussion: How can we use the Declaration and the specific articles to address current inequities? What would the “picture” look like if the Declaration was implied in the given situation? Who would be involved?
- When the 15 minutes is up, sound the drum, bell or cue that you have established. Each group will fold the top section on the paper with the writing on it over to allow the next group to write on the chart paper without reading what your group had previously written.
- Continue for 4 rotations (or a total of 40 minutes).

When each group has had the chance to visit each station, bring the group

back together. Unfold the papers and discuss as a group the similarities and differences in the responses. What are some of the common issues of inequity facing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples today? In what ways does the UN Declaration provide a guide or map to addressing these inequities? What role should government play? What are some ways we can assist in realizing the UN Declaration?

## **PART 5:** *It Matters to Us!*

(40 minutes)

Drawing on the previous exercise, begin a brainstorming session on how to engage others in the process of reconciliation and building a common understanding that addresses both the past and future injustices and how they matter to *all* Canadians. Use chart paper to jot down points that arise from the discussion.

You may wish to ask the following questions: Why does it matter to us? In what way can we help others learn about truth, reconciliation and equity? How can we work now to avoid perpetuating the cycle of discrimination so our children are not left having to apologize for our mistakes?

Hand out the campaign flyer prepared by KAIROS. Go over the action suggestions.

If it seems feasible, use the materials to **“Put yourselves in the Picture!”** by creating a sign that says “Truth, Reconciliation & Equity: They Matter to Us!” Add symbols, statements, or other creative messages on your sign that make it unique to your group. Take a picture of the people in the workshop holding the sign. Send a copy of your picture to [photos@kairoscanada.org](mailto:photos@kairoscanada.org) and help us create a huge public witness to an equitable Canada! This will become part of a mass public engagement campaign. If it does not seem to make sense at this workshop, send people home with this clear action for their church, community or KAIROS group.

**Encourage folks to meet with their Member of Parliament (or better yet, arrange a group that will go together!):** Press the government to put the Declaration into action in full collaboration with Indigenous peoples. Focus on one key inequity, such as education or child welfare, that urgently needs to be changed. Take a framed copy of your photo as a gift! Remember: If you need us, KAIROS is ready to help you prepare for a meeting, including providing key points for policy change.

Churches and groups can think about other people with whom they want to share this photo—a visual declaration of commitment—such as their local Friendship Centre, their local newspaper, or others in their denomination or union. How can they use their interest and commitment inspire others to get involved? Both the TRC and KAIROS offer many resources if people and groups wish to go further in learning and action.

If the group is small enough, close with a quick circle where all participants are invited to say one step—in learning or action—that they plan to take after this workshop (using one sentence). If the group is larger, ask people to share this with their neighbour.

Invite a closing prayer or song as appropriate.



Photo credit: Julie Graham

## **Inequity Cards:**

### **Inequity 1: 1 in 4 First Nations kids graduate from high school.**

“While in a mainstream pre-school program, there may be a few children with ‘special needs,’ as a result of the circumstances of our communities a very high percentage of our pre-school children may have ‘special needs.’” (*Early Learning and Child Care: An Aboriginal Engagement Strategy*, Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2005)

And yet... Mendelson’s 2008 paper cited a 2005 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) report - Evaluation of the Band-Operated and Federal Schools (BOFS) - which noted:

INAC’s figures show a level of funding for instructional services per student that ranges between \$5,500 and \$7,500. The Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Project (PCEIP 2003) shows a range of per student expenditures from \$6,800 to \$8,400 across Canada.

In other words, in 2005, the funding level for First Nations students was between \$1300 and \$2900 less than that for non First Nations students. (*Improving Education on Reserves: A First Nations Education Authority Act*, Michael Mendelson, 2008, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, page 6). Full text available here: [www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/684ENG.pdf](http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/684ENG.pdf)

### **Possible Answer for Inequity 1**

Article 14 (2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the state without discrimination.  
Article 22 (1): Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.  
Article 22 (2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

### **Inequity 2: Residential Schools**

From 1820 to the 1970s, the federal government removed Indigenous children from their homes and communities and placed them in church-run boarding schools, often far from their homes. In most cases the children were not allowed to speak their own languages. Most of the children stayed at the school for 8-10 months, while others stayed all year. (In *Peace and Friendship*, 2nd Edition.)

“There are more First Nations children in care right now than at the height of the residential school system. That system was a national disgrace that prompted Prime Minister Stephen Harper to apologize for its catastrophic impact on natives.” (“Native children in care surpass residential school era”, *Canadian Press*—July 2011 <http://m.ctv.ca/canada/20110731/native-children-care-surpass-residential-school-era-110731.html>)

### **Possible Answer for Inequity 2**

Article 7 (2): Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

Article 8 (1): Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

### **Inequity 3: Broken Promises**

Over the years, more than 2/3 of the land set aside for Indigenous peoples in treaties has been lost or taken through fraud, mismanagement, intimidation, expropriation for military purposes, or for development. Rarely has the government attempted to replace this land, or to compensate Indigenous peoples for its use. (In *Peace and Friendship*, 2nd Edition.)

### **Possible Answer for Inequity 3**

Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Article 20 (2): Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.

Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their

responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Article 26 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

Article 27: States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples’ laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, Indigenous peoples shall have the rights to participate in this process.

### **Inequity 4: Housing**

The number of new housing units built on reserves is about half of what’s needed, and the homes that are built are often of low quality. Indigenous people in Canada are 200 to 300 times more likely to share a room with another person than the overall Canadian population. (In *Peace and Friendship*, 2nd Edition.)

Five per cent of on-reserve housing is without adequate water supply and sewage disposal. About 10 per cent don’t have electricity. Many reserves have only improved their water, electrical and sewage systems in the last ten years. (In *Peace and Friendship*, 2nd Edition.)

### **Possible Answer for Inequity 4**

Article 21 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

“Expert after expert recognizes that family dysfunction is more broadly rooted in poverty, poor health and the oppressive legacy of the residential school system that robbed the parents of first-hand knowledge of how to

raise a family.’The simplest reason why, the most important reason why, is that these children are living in communities where families are facing enormous hardships,’ says Nico Trocmé, professor of Social Work

at McGill University, ‘The supports to bring up kids just aren’t there.’”

(“Native children in care surpass residential school era”, *The Canadian Press*—Heather Scofield, July 2011 <http://m.ctv.ca/canada/20110731/native-children-care-surpass-residential-school-era-110731.html>)

### **Inequity 5: Health**

Aboriginal people are twice as likely to get kidney disease and half as likely to receive a kidney transplant as other Canadians. (*In Peace and Friendship*, 2nd Edition.)

“As a direct impact of higher rates of poverty, Aboriginal children experience greater health challenges. There is a range of handicaps which arise from lower birth weight, poor nutrition, overcrowding, higher rates of childhood disease, and Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE), Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), and lack of access to appropriate early interventions to promote health and well-being, assessment and treatment for underlying conditions. Substandard housing, particularly in the north and the lack of access to healthy

foods due to prohibitive costs takes a further toll on the health of children.” (*Early Learning and Child Care: An Aboriginal Engagement Strategy*, Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2005)

“[T]oo many of our children grow up in overcrowded, poor quality housing, with problems arising from contaminated water, poor sewage, worse nutrition, lack of access to health and community services, living with families who do not have meaningful, stable employment. This is as much a concern in inner city environments as in remote Aboriginal communities.” (*Early Learning and Child Care: An Aboriginal Engagement Strategy*, Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2005)

### **Possible Answer for Inequity 5**

Article 24 (2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.

Article 22 (1): Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.

Article 22 (2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

### **Inequity 6: Violence Against Women**

“As of March 31, 2010, 582 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women and girls have been entered into NWAC’s Sisters In Spirit database. NWAC’s research has found that the intergenerational impact and resulting vulnerabilities of colonization and state policies—such as residential schools, the 60s Scoop, and the child welfare system—are underlying factors in the outcomes of violence experienced by Aboriginal women and girls [...] Nearly half of murder cases remain unsolved.

Nationally, 53 per cent of murder cases have been cleared by charges of homicide, while no charges have been laid in forty per cent of cases. However, there are differences in clearance rates by province. The clearance rate for murdered women and girls ranges from a low 42 per cent in Alberta to 93 per cent in Nunavut.” (*What Their Stories Tell Us: Research findings from the Sisters In Spirit initiative*, Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2010– [http://www.nwac.ca/sites/default/files/imce/2010\\_NWAC\\_SIS\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nwac.ca/sites/default/files/imce/2010_NWAC_SIS_Report_EN.pdf))

### **Possible Answer for Inequity 6**

Article 22 (1): Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.

Article 22 (2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

## **Additional Resources:**

**The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:** [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca)

**To hear Justice Murray Sinclair speak about the progress of the Commission and why it continues to be relevant for all, check out the following link:** <http://www.tvo.org/TVO/WebObjects/TVO.woa?videoid?901719363001>

**First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada:** [www.fnfcfs.com](http://www.fnfcfs.com)

**Shannen’s Dream:** <http://www.fnfcfs.com/shannensdream/learn-more>

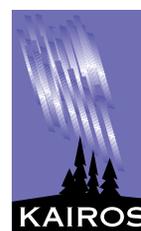
**Jordan’s Principle:** <http://www.fnfcfs.com/jordans-principle>

**Native children in care surpass residential school era**  
**The Canadian Press-Heather Scofield, July 2011:**  
<http://m.ctv.ca/canada/20110731/native-children-care-surpass-residential-school-era-110731.html>

**Aboriginal Peoples Television Network:**  
<http://www.aptn.ca/>

**For more information on Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC):** <http://www.kairosCanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/IndigenousPeoples/11-05-PFII-FPIC.pdf>

**UNDRIP factsheet:**  
<http://www.kairosCanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/IndigenousPeoples/UNDRIP-Factsheet.pdf>



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# FINDING OUR PLACE IN THE CIRCLE ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

## *Truth, Reconciliation & Equity: They Matter to Us!* KAIROS Campaign 2011-2012



Photo credit: KAIROS/Jennifer Henry

*These texts, prayers and suggestions for ritual are meant to be a resource for a worship service you might organize. They flow as a whole service or represent options for your consideration. They are intended to provide a focus for listening attentively to Indigenous voices in our midst. Please consider inviting an Indigenous Elder to help you in planning the service. This leader may wish to offer a teaching on the circle or the medicine wheel or another topic.*

### **Preparation**

- If you are not in a traditional church setting, organize the seating in a circle or concentric circles. Leave sufficient room in the centre for a round table or a circle marked out on the ground. If sitting in a circle is impossible given your setting, please place a large round table at the front of the worshipping space.

- Place a large central candle on the table
- Identify north, south, west and east in your space. Assemble one cloth or ribbon of red (or predominantly red) fabric, a cloth of yellow, a cloth of white and a cloth of black. Assign four people to process in the cloths or ribbons and arrange them on the central table corresponding to the proper direction during the opening hymn. There is variation among Indigenous peoples in assigning the colours to the directions. Consider researching and adopting the custom of the traditional territory where the worship is taking place. You might choose weighty and appropriate symbols to secure the fabric.
- Identify readers
- Choose hymns
- Make simple bracelets with ribbons of four directions colours or purchase round pins of the four directions (accessible from Friendship Centres)

### **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory**

*Invite participants into a moment of centring and silence. If possible, invite a representative of the traditional territory on which you are gathered to bring a welcome. If this is not possible, ensure that the territory is named and recognition is given to the people who inhabited and continue to inhabit this territory. Light the central candle.*

### **Opening Hymn**

*During the opening hymn, process in the cloths and arrange them on the central table in the appropriate directions.*

### **Hymns:**

There are many possible options including traditional, loved hymns such as Amazing Grace. Others include: Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life (LW513, WS157, H587, CP569, VU628, BP565), This Ancient Love (VU282), O Healing River (CP578, WS176, G372), May the Circle be Unbroken (repeat the chorus or use alternative verse such as RS, p. 98), Bring Many Names (VU268, CP395, BP310), O Great Spirit (VU239), It's a Song of Praise to the Maker (MVU30), Turning of the World (RS, p. 242), On Eagle's Wings (CP531, H596, VU808, LW787, BP57), Many and Great O God are Your Works (CP407, VU308, WS16, LW837), For the Beauty of the Earth (G89, WS10, LW561, CB531, VU226, PH432, LW879, BP434), I See a New Heaven (VU 713), We are Dancing Sarah's Circle (WS276), Canticle of the Turning (LW723), My Life flows on in Endless Song (LW763, WS245)

**Key:** Voices United-VU, More Voices United-MVU, Catholic Book of Worship III-CB, Common Praise-CP, Worship in Song-WS, Lutheran Book of Worship-LW, Psalter Hymnal-PH, Evangelical Lutheran Worship-EL, Hymnal-H, The Book of Praise-BP, Rise Up Singing-RS, Gathering-G

## **Blessing of the Four Directions**

Leader: We gather now, aware that there is a centre to our circle of life.

We will move from facing that central point to face each of the four sacred directions, by turning in a clockwise manner as each direction is named.

We give thanks as we gather to honour Creator God, offering praise for life in community with purpose and promise. We give thanks for the gifts of each of the directions and especially acknowledge the teaching of Elders, that it is the Creator's intention that all nations would come together from the four directions.

Let us turn to the direction of the East, the place of the rising sun. In the East, is the promise of a new day, the time of all beginnings, of all new things, of all new times, of all new hopes.

**All: May the light of each dawn enable us to see with new clarity the beauty of creation and give thanks to the Creator that we have a place in each new day.**

Leader: Let us face the direction of the South, the place of the warm sun and new growth. This is the time of exuberance and delight. This is the beginning of change in our lives.

**All: May warm winds help us to recognize the promise of rebirth among all living things.**

Leader: Let us turn to the direction of the West, the time of ripening growth. We know the cool and sustaining waters of the West that calm our maturing hearts with courage and strength.

**All: May the setting sun find us at peace with each other so we will have no fear of the night.**

Leader: Let us face the direction of the North. This is the place of the cold winter winds and the rich wisdom of fruitful living. Here, we remember our ancestors and think of the generations to come.

**All: May the winter winds give us clear vision of how all life can be nurtured and sustained.**

*(Revised from an Ecumenical Jubilee Prayer Service prepared by a group in Thunder Bay, Ontario)*

## **Opening Words**

Leader: We are all part of the circle of life with its promise of fullness and inclusion. In the circle all have a place, all have a voice, all belong. Many times we break the circle. We make inner circles of privilege that exclude. In our Canadian story, the legacy of residential schools was but one way we attempted to silence voices—to devalue and exclude languages, cultures and peoples.

Our churches and our government have offered apologies into the circle and they have begun their way around, touching those who feel able to receive the words, now and in the future. Those apologies are still moving, but there is much work left to do. Truth is essential, but words alone will not make the circle whole again. Until we act for reconciliation, until we act for equity, so that all children can have an equitable future, our circle will be broken.

Let us accept God's invitation, to take a place in the circle of truth, healing, reconciliation and equity, through our commitment to acts of justice. Indigenous people have taught that when we take our place in the circle, we do not avoid, or judge, but be present to the transformation that can happen in our midst.

Hear the invitation of **Rebeka Tabobondung**, an Ojibwa woman from Wasauksing Nation.

## **RECONCILIATION**

*We are waking up to our history from a forced slumber*

*We are breathing it into our lungs so it will be part of us again*

*It will make us angry at first*

*because we will see how much you stole from us*

*and for how long you watched us suffer we will see how you see us*

*and how when we copied your ways we killed our own.*

*We will cry and cry and cry because we can never be the same again But we will go home to cry and we will see ourselves in this huge mess and we will gently whisper the circle back and it will be old and it will be new*

*Then we will breathe our history back to you you will feel how strong and alive it is and you will feel yourself become a part of it And it will shock you at first because it is too big to see all at once and you won't want to believe it you will see how you see us and all the disaster in your ways how much we lost*

*And you will cry and cry and cry because we can never be the same again But we will cry with you and we will see ourselves in this huge mess and we will gently whisper the circle back and it will be old and it will be new.*

## **Response**

*After a moment of silence...*

Leader: We hear. We cry. We learn. We apologize.

**All: We believe. We pray. We hope. We act.**

Leader: God in your mercy, help us whisper the circle back.

**All: So it may be old and it may be new.**

## **The Peace**

## **Hymn**

## **Readings from Scripture**

*These texts are among the diversity of scripture that has had resonance for our shared work on Indigenous rights.*

*Joel 3: 28, 29, Isaiah 40:21-30, Psalm 91, Psalm 133*

*Matthew 5: 1-10, Luke 6:20-25*

*Colossians 3:12-17, 1 Corinthians 2: 10-16, 2nd Corinthians 5: 14-21, Revelations 2: 1-4*

## The Homily/Sermon

There are many options for this time:

- Consider inviting an Indigenous person to give a teaching or reflection from their tradition. If this is not possible, the teaching of the medicine wheel could be read with opportunities for silent reflection.
- If there is someone in your parish or congregation (or region) has been involved in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, perhaps as an Ambassador of Reconciliation, you might consider asking them to share their experience and thoughts.
- You might wish to reflect on the ministry of reconciliation given to us by God (2nd Cor 5:18). What does this look like in our time? The KAIROS Campaign Flyer **Truth, Reconciliation & Equity: They Matter to Us!** (see [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)) can provide material for reflection, including action suggestions that could be integrated.
- You might also wish to seek out denominational resources. Many of our member churches have theological resources on healing and reconciliation that can be a resource. Please check your church's national or regional offices.
- KAIROS has an adapted form of our Blanket Exercise which can be completed within 20 minutes. Please contact [orders@kairoscanada.org](mailto:orders@kairoscanada.org) and ask for the "Blanket Exercise for Worship."
- You could move the Leaders' Opening Words and Rebekah Tabobondung's poem to this part of the service where they could be the basis of a further reflection on the circle and possibilities for reconciliation.

## Hymn

### Possible Children's Reflection

*There are children's book on residential schools; however, one would need to be assured that books used would be appropriate to the level of children present, and that sufficient expertise and capacity was present in Sunday school (following the children's talk) to help children address any questions and concerns they would have. Alternately the readily available story *Sneetches on Beaches* by Dr. Seuss offers a strong option that addresses issues of racism and encourages the celebration of difference.*

*A further option is the following: (please adjust to reflect the diversity of the children)*

Ask the children if they ever watched or read *Timothy Goes to School* (a pre-school children's television show based on books by Rosemary Wells). If one of the children knows about Timothy, invite her or him to remember anything about "sorry". Tell them: In one story from *Timothy Goes to School*, two of Timothy's friends make a bad mistake, something that hurts a little girl named Yoko. The boys learn from their father how important it is to try to make it right, but also that there are three ways: "First, there's feeling sorry, second there's saying 'sorry,' and third, there's doing something to show you're sorry." Ask them: Can you remember that with me? First, there's feeling sorry, second there's saying 'sorry,' and third, there's doing something to show you're sorry."

Tell the children that sometimes kids do things wrong, sometimes adults do things wrong and sometimes countries do things wrong. Even churches can sometimes do things that are wrong. We need to remember the lesson of Timothy—to feel sorry, to say you are sorry, and to do something to show you are sorry.

Tell them that Canada has made mistakes in the way that it treats people. Today we are talking about mistakes in the way we treat First Peoples of this land. *Check that they know what Indigenous or First Nations means—an older child might assist.* We did not value and respect First Nations peoples the way we valued others. *If your church was involved in the schools, you might want to acknowledge this as well.*

Tell them that we are feeling sorry. We are trying to listen very carefully to the stories of people who were hurt. We are saying we are sorry—through making an apology. *Tell them how the Prime Minister apologized (or about the apology of your church).* And we are trying to show we are sorry by doing better in the future. *Share an action your church is doing to advocate for Indigenous peoples.*

Encourage them by saying that as adults we need your help to remind us that we always need to respect each other, celebrate what is good and important in each other and treat each other with fairness. Can you help us remember that? Can you do that in your own life? *They might have examples.*

*Develop further that God stands beside us when we are treated unfairly or hurt. And God also stand beside us even when we are the one that makes mistakes or does something bad. Then God asks us to feel sorry, say we are sorry and do something to show we are sorry. Remind them they are loved by God, their families and communities and they will help us do better in the future.*

*(If you want to use images of Timothy (who is a racoon), you can find these images on the web. The actual episode where this quote comes from is Episode 17A Taketombo)*

## Ritual

Bless the bracelets (or pins) and moving as well as possible in a circular motion, have the congregation attach a bracelet (or pin) on their neighbour. The words "I offer this to you in peace and friendship. Act for reconciliation and justice," could be used.

## Prayers of the People

Leader: Let us pray

We pray for the Indigenous peoples of Canada—First Nations, Inuit and Métis—and celebrate their wise and grateful relationship to all of your creation.

**All: Encircle us with gratitude, turn us to acts of grace.**

Leader: We seek your forgiveness, and that of our brothers and sisters, for melding a sense of superiority with religious zeal.

**All: Encircle us with your truth, turn us to acts of contrition.**

Leader: We remember the children taken and the parents left behind, and we seek your healing truth.

**All: Encircle us with your mercy, turn us to acts of reconciliation.**

Leader: We pray for the inequities and injustices that persist—stolen land, broken down schools, violence against women—and we commit ourselves to work for change.

**All: Encircle us with your Spirit, turn us to acts of justice.**

Leader: Confident of your promise, we strive for a circle—whole and holy—where all your children have place and voice and where your dream of justice is revealed.

**All: We are your people, love us into roundness, transform us for your gracious purpose.**

Leader: In the name of the One who liberates us all.

**All: Amen**

## Hymn

### Benediction

Leader:

Return now to the circle of Life, knowing,  
That the love of Creator God is with us,  
The compassion of Jesus inspires us,  
The hope of the Holy Spirit comforts us.  
May everyone we meet, know of our  
praise  
of God's name, by the singing and dancing  
of our hands, heart, and feet!

*(By Lee Claus, Francis Sandy Theological Centre, 2008)*

## Other Poems and Prayers

### THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND

There are many people who have seen  
the way things are,  
And have asked almost in despair,  
but what can I do?  
And the only answer has been,  
you have to do something about You.  
Only you can decide whether you will  
be a part of  
this destruction or whether you will  
set your  
heart and mind against it.  
You may not be able to change where  
you work or how  
you earn your living,  
But you are totally responsible for the  
direction  
that you give your own life.

We are only visitors here in this part  
of Creation.

We are guests of the one who owns  
this Creation.

We are always to keep in mind that we  
can own nothing here, not even our  
own lives.

So the purpose of life then is  
Not to acquire possessions  
But to honour the Creator by how we  
live.

If we choose to be on the side of that  
Great Positive Power

We have no choice but to set our  
hearts and minds

Against the destruction around us  
But thought without action is useless.  
We must be on one side or the other  
And how we will involve ourselves  
must be the free choice

Of everyone.

If we choose to act, we must act  
intelligently

And with common sense.

It means we must do everything in  
our power to understand  
The questions that we choose to  
involve ourselves with.

But whatever we are, we must be  
action people  
Even if the only action possible is to  
pray.

Arthur Solomon, *Songs for the People: Teachings on the Natural Way*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

### TEACHING OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL

When you look at a tree, you will notice  
that for every year it survives, there is  
a circle. The next year another forms—  
and the year after, there is another.  
Eventually, the tree becomes strong.

The medicine wheel is like a tree.  
In the medicine wheel are the four  
directions—the east, the south, the  
west and the north. The medicine  
wheel teaches us a holistic approach  
to life.

Knowledge of ourselves as human  
beings is a protection for us, a help to  
how we live. We must understand the  
medicine wheel to bring healing to  
ourselves and to our communities.

All learning is on a path beginning  
in the east. The east is called the  
place of illumination. This is a simple  
word meaning "seeing." Illumination  
represents physical sight as well as  
spiritual insight—the way of the soul.

South is where warmth comes from.  
This is the place of growth; we keep  
on growing—we never reach a place  
where we stop. Trust and innocence,  
accepting our humanness, becomes  
foremost in our minds as we journey  
through the place represented  
by south on the medicine wheel.  
Sometimes we judge each other too  
harshly; we need to learn to be kind, to  
accept ourselves.

The west is the place of introspection. Here we learn to look at ourselves. It is important to be able to look at ourselves, to see within. It's much easier to judge others—but we need to evaluate ourselves, to know our humanity.

Knowledge begins in the north. We can never start by seeing something and knowing. We must always start by seeing how something works. All learning takes time and work.

The more we understand about life, the deeper our roots grow. We must keep in balance these four things: illumination, trust and innocence, introspection and knowledge. As we understand these things, moving in circles outward, always growing, always learning, we will become strong like the tree –the tree of life.

God works through people. People who are spiritually strong have a glow—a love for life. These are our Elders, the people who bring healing in our communities. They do not seek to gain personal power. Instead, they are kind people, Channels for healing which is carried out by the Creator.

William Dumas, Thompson/South Indian Lake, Manitoba *The Journey: Stories and Prayers for the Christian Year from People of the First Nations*, edited by Joyce Carlson, Toronto: Anglican Book Centre Toronto, 1991

## REMEMBERING THE CHILDREN PRAYER

God of our Ancestors,  
who holds the spirits of our  
grandmothers and grandfathers  
and the spirits of our grandchildren,  
Remembering the Children,  
we now pledge ourselves to speak  
the Truth,  
and with our hearts and our souls  
to act upon the Truth we have heard  
of the injustices lived,  
of the sufferings inflicted,  
of the tears cried,  
of the misguided intentions imposed,  
and of the power of prejudice and  
racism  
which were allowed to smother the  
sounds and laughter of  
the forgotten children.  
Hear our cries of lament  
for what was allowed to happen,  
and for what will never be.  
In speaking and hearing and acting  
upon the Truth  
may we as individuals and as a nation  
meet the hope of a new beginning.  
Great Creator God  
who desires that all creation live in  
harmony and peace,  
Remembering the Children  
we dare to dream of a Path of  
Reconciliation  
where apology from the heart leads  
to healing of the heart

and the chance of restoring the circle,  
where justice walks with all,  
where respect leads to true  
partnership,  
where the power to change comes  
from each heart.  
Hear our prayer of hope,  
and guide this country of Canada  
on a new and different path. Amen

*From the Aboriginal and Church Leaders tour to Prepare for Truth and Reconciliation, March 2008*

## CLOSING NAVAJO PRAYER

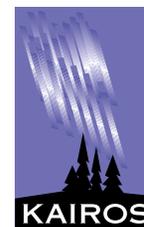
In Beauty may I walk.  
All day long may I walk.  
Through the returning seasons may  
I walk.  
On the trail marked with pollen  
may I walk.  
With grasshoppers about my feet  
may I walk.  
With dew about my feet may I walk.  
With Beauty may I walk.  
With Beauty before me, may I walk.  
With Beauty behind me, may I walk.  
With Beauty above me, may I walk.  
With Beauty below me, may I walk.  
With Beauty all around me, may I walk.  
In old age wandering on a trail of Beauty,  
lively, may I walk.  
In old age wandering on a trail of Beauty,  
living again, may I walk.

*From Tales of The Heart: Affective Approaches to Global Education*, Tom Hampson and Loretta Whalen. New York: Friendship Press 1991.



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