

Truth and Reconciliation Week

With each of us living and benefitting from the lands and territories of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples, we all have a part to play in the Canada-wide journey of Reconciliation. Scouts Canada invites you to join us in discovering the role and responsibility we all have. This begins with learning more about Indigenous perspectives.

As an organization, we are going through our own journey towards Reconciliation. We are beginning our responsibility in this journey by learning about Indigenous communities and listening to their stories. Each of these introductory activities were co-created and developed by one of our partner's Aboriginal Network from Shell Canada.

Introduction

Indigenous is a collective term used to identify the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous people: First Nations, Métis and Inuit. These are three distinct peoples with unique and distinctive rights in our constitution, along with their distinct histories, languages, cultural practices. More than 1.67 million people in Canada identify as Indigenous, according to the 2016 Census.

Indigenous communities are located in urban, rural and remote locations across Canada. They include:

First Nations, generally located on lands called reserves: Indigenous peoples who are neither Métis nor Inuit and come from specific original Nations. These communities are distinctive nations, such as: Cree, Assiniboine, Haida, Ojibwa, Tsuutína, etc. Find out which people are close to you by searching online,

Inuit communities: Indigenous people living in northern Canada, mainly in: Nunavut, Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and Labrador,

Métis communities: Métis are people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and one of the three recognized Indigenous groups in Canada. The Métis Nation originated largely in western Canada and emerged as a political force in the 19th century, radiating outwards from the Red River Settlement,

Indigenous peoples (including Métis, Non-Status Indigenous peoples, Inuit, and First Nation individuals) in cities or towns which are not part of reserves or traditional territories (for example, the First Nations community in Winnipeg).

External Resources for Your Learning Journey:

[Truth and Reconciliation Week—National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

[High Five—Indigenous Games for Children](#)

[The Word Indigenous—CBC Kids](#)

[Kids' Stop—Government of Canada](#)

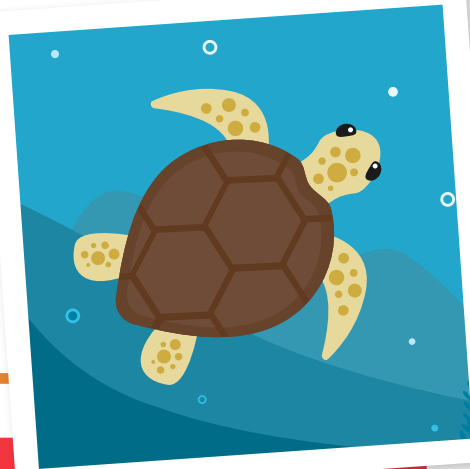
[CBC Kids—Indigenous](#)



Turtle Island

Turtle Island is what some Indigenous communities call “North America.” The name comes from various Indigenous oral traditions (which vary in description depending on the community) that tell stories of a turtle that holds the world on its back. The turtle is said to support the world and is a symbol of life within Indigenous communities.

Explore the [Story of Turtle Island](#) and learn more about one of the perspectives Indigenous peoples.



Safety Note:

Safety is not just for physical concerns—our mental and emotional safety is equally as important. You may find that some portions of this week’s activity, like the discussions, are difficult and/or distressing. Take the time to listen to your emotions and reach out for support to a parent, trusted friend or [Kids Help Phone](#) if need be.

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Plan:

- What does Indigenous mean? Where does the term come from? What is the [Story of Turtle Island](#)?
- What treaty area and/or territory do you reside in?
- How will you learn about the Story of Turtle Island?
- Why is it an important story?

Do:

- As a Section, [read](#) or [listen](#) to the Story of Turtle Island. You may find slight differences depending on which community it originates from.
- After reading and exploring the story, discuss what you’ve learned. What do you know now that you didn’t before?
- What teachings could you learn from the Story of Turtle Island? For example, explore the importance of the sacrifice that the muskrat makes for the greater good, the significance of nature and animals within the story, or other teachings.
- Next, as a Section, discuss how you can take steps towards reconciliation and make positive change through your own acts of kindness or sacrifice. How will you continue your learning journey?
- Explore some local or national reconciliation initiatives to get you started.

Examples of Initiatives:

- [Truth and Reconciliation Week](#)
- [Orange Shirt Day](#)
- [School is a Time for Dreams](#)
- [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#)
- [Secret Path Week](#)
- [Bear Witness Day](#)

Review:

- What region does the version of Turtle Island you learned about come from?
- What did you learn about Turtle Island?
- What do you know now that you didn’t know before?
- How will you continue your learning journey?

The Ojibwe Creation Story of Turtle Island*

Kitche Manitou, the Great Spirit, had a vision, a dream. He made the earth, the rocks, water, fire, and wind. He made the plants, animals, fishes, birds, and insects and then the Original People, Anishinabe, last.

There are beliefs and experiences that Indigenous People hold in common. Most important are the beliefs pertaining to the Great Spirit, Kitche Manitou, and the vision dream he had where he created the good red Earth, our Mother—and water, wind, and fire. He also made new life forms in the shape of plants, animals, birds, fishes, insects; whereby each possessed its own unique spirit and nature. He gave each life a gift unique in spirit and nature. There is a place and purpose for each life.

It is said the Original People were given the power to dream. Man dreams and prays to attain certain powers from other spirits (or spirit helpers) because man is weaker than other animals. Woman like Mother Earth was given the gift to give life and that is why woman is considered powerful.

Great Spirit gave Indigenous People the power to dream. Men were given powers from spirit helpers while women received the powerful gift to give life.

Kitche Manitou then made The Great Laws of nature so that all living things could live in harmony and balance. The Great Laws governed the place and movement of the sun, moon, earth and stars; the powers of wind, water, fire and rock; the rhythm and continuity of life, birth, growth and decay. All things lived and worked by these laws.

One of the beliefs pertaining to the Great Spirit is that everything—both seen and unseen—is connected. Non-Indigenous peoples refer to this as the laws of nature where all living things exist in balance and harmony. According to Kitche Manitou, the Great Laws of Nature dictate the rhythm of life, birth, growth and decay, and the movement of the moon, sun, earth and stars.

At some point the Anishinabe began to fight with one another, hurting each other. Kitche Manitou saw that there was no harmony or respect for the living. Then there was a great flood, destroying many life forms. Nanaboozhoo, a few animals and birds survived. All agreed that they needed land to survive.

The Anishinabe filled their hearts with anger and discord. This was followed by a great flood which destroyed the harmony and balance of the good red Earth. Great Spirit spoke to his People, reminding them that life is connected, and that we should honor, respect and protect the Earth, our Mother.

The loon, beaver, otter, beaver all dived as far as they could try to grab some earth. Each came to the surface of the water barely breathing. Finally, the little muskrat spoke, "I will try". Nanaboozhoo and the other animals laughed. "You are smaller than many of the other animals. If you think you can do it then go." Muskrat dived deep into the water. He was gone for a very long time. The other animals and Nanaboozhoo thought that for sure the muskrat must have drowned. After they had given up bubbles popped through the water surface and up floated a very exhausted muskrat. Barely alive, Nanaboozhoo picked up the little creature and found some earth between his paws. That earth was put on the turtles back and from that Turtle Island was formed.

According to the storytellers who bring the lessons of the Great Spirit to the People, the loon, beaver, otter, and other animals all dived deep into the water to gain a piece of the Earth, our Mother. Nanaboozhoo, the muskrat, was fearless; he dove so deep, that the others thought he had drowned. After a long time below, he surfaced, barely breathing, with earth between his paws. This earth was carried on the backs of turtles. This was how Turtle Island was created.

* This story is one of many versions.

For Junior Sections

Mother Earth

In many Indigenous languages, “Mother Earth” is depicted as a living person. Indigenous communities take no person, animal, or thing for granted. Everyone and everything has a role and a place!

As food gatherers, Indigenous people moved to areas where the land was bountiful. Each of the four seasons had a special time to hunt and trap animals for food and clothing, a time to catch fish,

to harvest fruit and berries, and a time to pick and prepare medicines and roots. This knowledge and understanding of the natural environment reflected the importance of sustaining Mother Earth from generation to generation.

Through the Indigenous perspective, we can learn about the importance of nature, protecting it, and how we can explore it correctly.



Safety Note:

- How can you recognize and stay safe when encountering hazardous plants? Check out this [hazardous plant safety tip!](#)
- Although many plants are edible, in this activity, stick to identifying and examining plants instead of touching or eating them. Remember the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace!

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Plan:

- Where will you explore nature?
- Why is nature so important in Indigenous cultures?
- How can you stay safe in this activity?

Do:

- As a Section, find a place to explore the great outdoors. Using plant ID apps, such as [WWF's Seek App](#) or the [iNaturalist App](#), identify various plants, animals, herbs, and more.
- As you identify, explore how they connect to Indigenous communities. Plants are often used for food, medicine, art, materials, and more.
 - How are they used?
 - What are they used for?
 - Why are they important?
- As you learn about new plants, take it further and try the [Be a Plant Doctor](#) or [In My Backyard](#) activity to learn how to take care of them. Many plants get sick—just like humans—and we can learn the importance of protecting land, nature, and wildlife from our Indigenous Communities.

Examples of Indigenous Plants:

- Mountain Maple (*Acer Glabrum*)
- Hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta var. californica*)
- Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)
- Goat's Beard (*Aruncus dioicus*)
- Red Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)
- Sword Fern (*Polystichum munitim*)
- Black Gooseberry (*Ribes lacustre*)
- Cottonwood (*Populus Balsamifera*)
- Swamp Horsetail
- Willow (*Salix*)
- Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichitum americanum*)
- High-bush Cranberry (*Viburnum edule*)
- Indian Plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)
- Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*)
- Devil's Club (*Oplopanex horridus*)
- Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)
- Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
- Sweet Grass (*Hierochloe odorata*)
- Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*)

Review:

- What plants did you find?
- What did you learn about plants and how they could be used?
- What you learn from Indigenous Communities about protecting nature?

For Junior Sections

Indigenous Games

Indigenous communities have played sports for thousands of years to teach survival and other life skills, for fun and for competition. Did you know that kayaking, canoeing, tobogganing, snowshoeing and archery—sports and activities we do so often in Scouting—originate from Indigenous communities thousands of years ago? In fact, Lacrosse, our national sport, was originally played by First Nations people on the east coast of North America.

Many of these sports have been changed over time and are played differently than they are in Indigenous communities. In this activity, learn about why these sports and activities are important, how and why they were started, and try some of them out.



Plan:

- What sports or activities will you explore?
- How were those sports played within Indigenous communities?
- What equipment do you need?

Do:

- As a Section, explore some of the sports that originated from Indigenous communities. Have you ever played any of them?
- Discover how and why these sports and activities were played in Indigenous communities. Why have they changed?
- Try some other games to learn more about why and how they are played. Check out [High Five's—Indigenous Games for Children](#) to find some you've never tried before. These games were shared by community members themselves and are connected to specific communities!

Examples of Indigenous Connections:

- **Tobogganing:** A toboggan is a simple sled which is a traditional form of transport used by the Innu and Cree of northern Canada. The word is believed to be of either Micmac or Algonquian origin, meaning a towed sled.
- **Snowshoeing:** The “traditional” webbed snowshoe as we know it today had direct origins to North American indigenous people, e.g., the Huron, Cree, and so forth. Snowshoes were essential tools for fur traders, trappers and anyone whose life or living depended on the ability to get around in areas of deep and frequent snowfall, and they remain necessary equipment for forest rangers and others who must be able to get around areas inaccessible to motorized vehicles when the snow is deep.

What other connections can you find in the sports, games and other activities played in Canada?

Resources:

[4 Sports You Didn't Know Were Indigenous](#)

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Review:

- What did you learn about sports in Indigenous communities?
- Why is important for Canada to recognize the connection to Indigenous sports?
- Which sport was your favourite? What were the key lessons or teachings reflected in that sport?

For Senior Sections

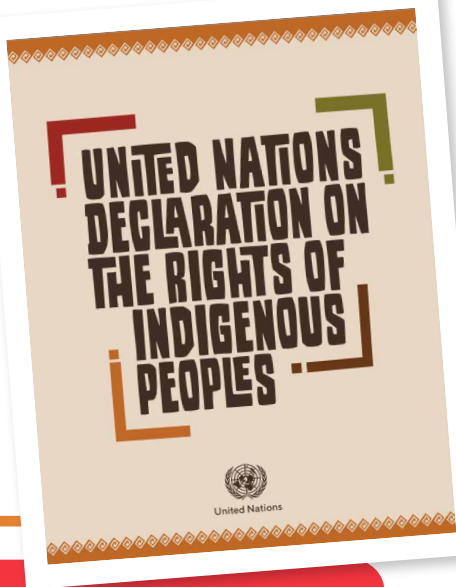
Be True to Yourself

The [United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP) is a declaration containing an agreement among governments on how Indigenous peoples should be treated around the world, according to their local preferences and practices.

One important right within the declaration is the right to self-determination. Meaning, Indigenous peoples have the right to decide what is best for them and their communities.

As a Section, explore what self-determination means, and why is it so important—including areas such as languages, cultures, etc.

Image: from [here](#)



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Plan:

- What is the [United Nations](#)?
- What research or discussions will you need to have before this activity?
- How will you ensure that all voices can be heard?
- Where are the Indigenous communities local to you?

Do:

- Start by exploring what is important to you, your family, or even your Section.
- Through drawing, writing, or speaking, discuss/document all these important aspects of your life and why they are so important to you, your family, your culture.
- You may notice... what's important to you may be very different than the person next to you!
- As a Section, discuss why self-determination (the right to make the best decisions for ourselves) is important to keeping true to our beliefs, values, traditions, etc.
- Where are the Indigenous communities local to you? Where can you find out more information about their community's vision and local events? Refer to the [First Nations Map](#) for some help on locating communities and finding community websites.

Review:

- What do you know now that you did not know before?
- How did this activity make you feel, and what did you learn?
- How can we continue to support Indigenous peoples and communities?

Resources:

- [United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#)
- [First Nation Profiles Interactive Map](#)

Steps Towards Reconciliation

Everyone in Canada has a part to play in the reconciliation journey with Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples. Explore [12 Ways to Participate in Reconciliation](#) by Kids Help Phone and the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund, and decide how your Section is going to participate.

Where does the journey to Reconciliation begin? As Canadians, an important step is learning about the past, understanding the harm that has been done toward Indigenous peoples and how it continues to this day, and committing to an action plan to change our behaviour for the better.

Do:

As a Section, learn what reconciliation means, and why it is needed.

Explore the [12 Ways to Participate in Reconciliation](#) by Kids Help Phone and the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund and decide how your Section is going to help:

1. Research First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in your area to understand their history and contributions to society.
2. Watch movies by Indigenous filmmakers or read Indigenous literature,
3. Learn more about Indigenous arts and artists,
4. Attend local Indigenous cultural events open to the public.
5. Research and do a presentation on reconciliation for your class or organization.
6. Learn the land acknowledgement in your area. If there isn't one, consider reaching out to your local government to engage Indigenous peoples in the area to create one. Encourage your school or organization to give a daily land acknowledgement as part of their morning routine and at important events.
7. Visit a local Indigenous organization and/or Friendship Centre.
8. Participate in Secret Path Week, Orange Shirt Day, Bear Witness Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day and/or other important national and local Indigenous awareness events.
9. Have an Indigenous representative or Elder to visit your school or organization to share their knowledge. When preparing your request, it's important to learn about and follow proper protocols (e.g., you may need to present an Elder with tobacco or an honorarium during their visit).
10. Study an Indigenous language (especially one used in your area).
11. If you're a student, consider asking your teacher to [sign-up](#) for the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund's new legacy Schools program.
12. Organize an event for a charity that supports Indigenous peoples.

Plan:

- What is reconciliation?
- How will you work towards reconciliation as a Section?
- How will ensure that all voices can be heard?
- Are there any Indigenous community members you can involve?

Review:

- How did this activity make you feel, and what did you learn?
- What do you think is the role of a responsible ally? How can we continue to support indigenous peoples and communities with that in mind?
- What will you do contribute to our society's reconciliation journey?

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