

RECONCILIATION, RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, AND MICAH 6:8

September 24, 2023

Have you heard of Orange Shirt Day? Becoming aware of the truth about Residential Schools is quite recent. In Canada, our children are learning about it in some schools, but many of us did not.

Roughly 150,000 children attended Residential Schools across Canada alone. Many children were silenced, oppressed, abused, and even killed. From the 1870s to the 1990s, Indigenous children in Canada were forced to go to these schools. The last Residential School closed in 1996. It is startling that over 4100 children died while in care at these schools, and many died in their attempts to escape them.



In the United States, there were 367 Native American Indian boarding schools that operated between the years 1860 and 1978. Like in Canada, many children in Native American boarding schools experienced abuse, malnourishment, and disease due to inadequate living conditions. The purpose of these schools was to erase the culture and unique identity of the Indigenous peoples.

These are such hard truths to face. Even more difficult is that many of these schools were run by church denominations.

Micah 6:8 calls us:

- **To do justice (do actions that promote reconciliation).** We can teach our children even at a young age to be justice seekers and change makers. Invite them to be a justice seeker this Orange Shirt Day (September 30). In Canada, maybe you will choose to wear orange as a family and when someone asks why, you can tell them Phyllis' story.
- **To love mercy (create empathy).** Read a storybook about Residential Schools and talk about it as a family. Watch [the video of Phyllis Webstad's story](#) together. Create visual symbols to remember and share the story. Cut out paper leaves, write words on them about how children should feel in school, and tape them to your window. Paint rocks of remembrance for those children who never came home, and place those rocks in a nearby park.
- **To walk humbly with God (listen and learn).** Pray for those children who went to Residential Schools who are all grown up now. As a family activity, trace your hands and write out the Bible verse Micah 6:8. Go to a school in your neighborhood, and as a family do a prayer walk around it, praying for the students, staff, and families. Especially pray for those who experience generational trauma due to residential schooling.

Below are resources that may support you and your family in honoring those who survived and those who were silenced in Residential Schools.

Phyllis's Story - [Phyllis Webstad - On Orange Shirt Day.](#)

Stolen Words by Melanie Florence - [MAMA READS: Stolen Words By Melanie Florence & Illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard](#)

When We Were Alone - [When We Were Alone | Kids Read Aloud Book | National Orange shirt Day | Residential School Story](#)

When I Was Eight - [When I Was Eight - Read Aloud with Sound Effects](#)

I Am Not a Number - [I am Not A Number](#)

Secret Path - [Gord Downie's The secret path \(cartoon\)](#)

Kids Corner Resource: [Resources for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Indigenous Peoples' Day](#)

written by Holly Sperling

<https://kidscorner.net/parent-blog/reconciliation-residential-schools-and-micah-68>
Printed on February 12, 2025