

# National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

SAMEDI, 30 SEPTEMBRE 2023

## Journée Nationale de la Vérité et de la Réconciliation



### LESSON FLOW

Introduction	5 mins
Bible Time	5 mins
Story Time	10 mins
Discussion Questions	15 mins
Snacks	5 mins
Game	15 mins
Arts and Crafts	10 mins
Blessing	1 min

### OBJECTIVE

To help children understand what they should do to bring about reconciliation if they treat others unfairly – admit the truth, apologize, and show by their actions that they want to reconcile with the other person.

### INTRODUCTION

- How do you feel when someone is mean to you or treats you unfairly?
- How do you feel when someone takes something from you and won't give it back?
- How do you feel when you are playing with your friends and some other kids come and take over your game and drive you and your friends away?

Today we will learn about Marie and how her people, the Mi'kmaq, were treated unfairly many years ago. But first, we will learn how Jesus wants us to treat others and what we should do if we treat someone badly.

### BIBLE LESSON

#### **The Good Samaritan - Luke 10:27-37**

**Verse to learn:** Do for others what you want them to do for you... (Matthew 7:12 GNT)



### Luke 10:27-37

One day Jesus said, *"Love your neighbour as yourself."*

A man asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?"

So Jesus told this story:

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. Next, a Levite came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out some money and gave it to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will pay you for any extra expense you may have.'"

### BIBLE LESSON DISCUSSION

- What do you think Jesus meant by "neighbour"?
- I wonder what Jesus was trying to tell everyone with this story?
- Who do you think was a neighbour to the man who was hurt?
- Why do you think the others did not stop to help?
- Have you ever seen someone who was hurt? Have you ever seen someone say mean words to another person? What did you do? Did you try to help? Why/why not?

**Jesus said we should treat others like we want them to treat us.**

- What do you think that means?
- Who should we treat kindly? Who are your "neighbours"?
- How does Jesus want us to treat others?



## STORY TIME

**Note:** Mi'kmaq words and pronunciation can be found at

<https://www.mikmaqonline.org/words-mp3/media/p/pjila%27si/>

[https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Mi%27kmaq\\_language/Greetings](https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Mi%27kmaq_language/Greetings)

Pusu'l means hello in the Mi'kmaw language. On this day, let us greet each other with a blessing of remembrance and honour one another as we reflect with God's grace for Truth & Reconciliation.

I want to share with you a story about Maria who lives in Mi'kma'ki. We know it today as Nova Scotia. Maria is from the Mi'kmaq First Nation. Long ago her relatives lived here first. She goes to a school on the reserve where she learns about her people and the Mi'kmaw language that they spoke many years ago.

She lives with her mother and father and brothers and sisters. Her grandmother and cousin live there too all together in a small house, but everyone helps each other when someone needs a place to stay.

Maria's grandmother is a knowledge keeper. She holds many stories about the Mi'kmaq people.

She tells Maria and those around her about a time, long ago when the Mi'kmaq were the only people living on their land.

She says of that time, "We had free use of the lands. The woods were full of caribou and moose and beaver. The rivers were full of salmon and there were shellfish in the sea. The forest provided wood and bark for making canoes and snowshoes and shelters. In the spring, family groups got together after the hard winter. We gathered at fishing stations and settlement areas. It was a time for travel, sharing and trading, for discussing political issues and for celebrating marriage rites.

"In the summer, our people lived near the seacoast or along the rivers and collected the food they would need in winter. We dried or smoked meat and fish for winter. In late summer and autumn, we gathered plants to eat and plants for medicine. We picked fruits and berries. We collected rushes, cattails and other plants to make baskets, bags, and mats.

"When winter came, we moved inland to the shelter of the forest. We lived in small family groups and ate the foods harvested in summer and autumn. We went ice fishing and hunted moose and caribou along the shores of the frozen lakes. These animals gave us meat, hides for clothing, and bone and antler that we used to make tools. We travelled to trapping and hunting areas on the frozen rivers and lakes.

"That was all many moons ago. It is different now..."

When Maria's grandmother stopped talking, Maria noticed she looked sad. She watched her settle back into her chair and close her eyes as Maria thought about her words. Now we have a chance to think about these words too.

- What was life like for the Mi'kmaq many years ago?
- What does many moons ago mean?
- Why do you think Maria's grandmother was sad after telling her story?
- Have you ever helped your parents to gather food for your family (berry-picking, fishing, hunting, etc.)?

It is difficult for Maria's grandmother to speak of when the Europeans came. Although Maria already knows this story. It was the French who came first, and the Mi'kmaq offered them friendship and helped them get settled in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia). Then the English came.

The French and the English were rivals. The English wanted the Mi'kmaq to be their allies, so they made Peace and Friendship Treaties. The English promised that they would not bother the Mi'kmaq way of life in their fishing, hunting, planting, and other activities and said they could continue to live on their land. The Mi'kmaq promised to not disturb the English settlements. Many promises were broken.

The Mi'kmaq couldn't live peacefully on the land where they had lived for many years. Sometimes the Mi'kmaq aided the French when there was conflict with the English. More Europeans came and more promises were broken.

The Mi'kmaq were taken from their land and made to move onto reserves. The Mi'kmaq were told where and when they could hunt and fish. Laws were enacted to the detriment of the Mi'kmaq people.

This story is not unique, it happened to other First Nation peoples all across Canada. Children were taken from their families and made to live at schools where they could not speak their own language or sing their songs or play their games or see their families. The Europeans changed their Mi'kmaq names to English or French names as their culture and way of life was stolen through assimilation. Many of these children died at the schools, suffered through abuse, and never saw their parents again.

The Mi'kmaq children who survived to graduate from school often found it difficult to find work. But if they went back to the reserves, life was very hard there as well. There wasn't enough money to buy necessities like food and sometimes they lacked clean water.



#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did the Europeans treat the First Nations people?
- How do you think the First Nations people felt when their land and homes were taken?
- Was it fair to take their land and homes from them?
- How might it feel to have to stop speaking your language, to have to change your name, and to move away from your own home and family to go to a boarding school when you didn't know when you might see them again and especially if the teachers were not kind?
- Was it fair to make the Mi'kmaq give up their language and customs and Mi'kmaq names?
- Would you want to be treated like that?

Maria's family is still waiting for truth-tellers and peacemakers who will share the land and its resources. They need people like the Good Samaritan who will help in healing their wounds and setting things right.

#### SNACK

The Mi'kmaq gathered fruit and smoked meat as part of their diet. Serve beef jerky and berries (strawberries, blueberries, dried cranberries).

## The Game of Waltes

<https://www.cbu.ca/indigenous-affairs/mikmaq-resource-centre/miscellany/the-game-of-waltes/>

### Materials Needed:

- Circular wooden dish (about 12 inches in diameter)
- Six small discs with a blank side and a dotted side
- 55 counting sticks (51 plain sticks, 1 king pin, 3 notched sticks)
- Piece of leather or cloth to place the dish on

### Setting Up:

- Place the circular wooden dish in the center between two players.
- Put the six dice on the dish with the marked faces facing downward.
- Each player should have their own private pile of winnings.

### Gameplay:

Players take turns tossing the dice. To toss the dice, a player raises the dish a bit from the ground and then brings it down with enough force to turn the dice.

If the result of the toss shows all marked or all unmarked faces, the player continues to toss the dice for additional points. If not, the player's turn ends, and they withdraw the winnings (if any) from the general pile to form their private pile.

The other player then takes their turn, following the same rules for tossing the dice.

Two successive throws of either a single point or five points count three times the amount of one throw (3 or 15 points, respectively).

Three successive throws count five times as much as a single throw, and so on.

### Using Counting Sticks:

When the pile of counting sticks is exhausted, players use plain sticks to represent their winnings. One stick placed vertically represents one point, while one stick placed horizontally represents five points.

Players continue to add sticks to their pile as they score points.

The use of sticks as counters delays settlement until the game is near its end and can increase the count indefinitely to match the game's duration.

### Settlement:

Settlements occur at the discretion of the players, usually when one player's token pile is approaching the limit of the other player's ability to pay.

If a player has only five plain sticks left and can score five points before their opponent scores any, they win the game, even if their opponent has more winnings.

If the opponent scores one point before the player with five sticks can score five points, the player still has a chance, but it's reduced.

If, after paying the three plain sticks representing a single point, a player has only two plain sticks left, they must win seven points before their opponent wins one point, or they must forfeit the game.

Players cannot score more points than are represented in their private pile of winnings.

### Additional Rules:

- To count five points on plain sticks, use four bundles of four sticks each instead of the expected five bundles of three sticks each.
- To count six points, use a notched stick plus only two plain sticks instead of the usual three.
- Remember, the game continues until one player wins according to the specified conditions or until one player can no longer pay their debts, resulting in a win for the opponent.

## ARTS & CRAFTS

**Picture Messages:** Before the Europeans came, the Mi'kmaq told stories instead of writing them down. Sometimes they drew pictures to leave a message for their friends. The pictures were called hieroglyphs or pictographs. Try using three or four pictures to write a message. For example, a walking stickman, a stickman standing by a house, and then a ball and bat, could mean, "I am going to my friend's house to play ball."

**Note:** More info on Mi'kmaq writing can be found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mi\\_kmaq\\_hieroglyphic\\_writing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mi_kmaq_hieroglyphic_writing)

### **Closing Comments**

The government of Canada is making new laws that treat First Nation peoples more fairly. The First Nations people are starting to tell stories of how they were treated and teaching their people about their language and culture and what life was like before the Europeans came and how to proudly live as an Indigenous person today. Canadians are learning the truth and beginning to apologize for what they did in the past and live in a better way. They want to see First Nations people treated fairly. This is called Truth and Reconciliation.

Life is still hard for many First Nation peoples. Some Canadians still treat First Nation peoples unfairly and do not like them because they are different.

1 **Admit the truth**

2 **Apologize**

3 **Show by our actions that we want to be reconciled**



## BLESSING

Lord, help us to be like the Good Samaritan and help those who are in need. Bless those who have suffered among our Indigenous population and let there be peace in our nation. Help us as individuals to say we're sorry if we've done something that has hurt others and to defend people who we know are being treated badly. Thank you, God, that you are always our defense and our peace. Let your peace be with us as we go today.

Lead the children in "Passing the Peace" by inviting children to shake hands and offer one another peace by sharing this statement: "The peace of Christ be with you," as you close for the day.



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