



Greetings everyone.

To continue the 4Directions group, we continue to share a weekly plan of resources to use on each unit.

You are all welcome to use it any day of the week as you see fit to ensure that all members of the group continue to feel the presence of their spiritual and cultural practices. Of course, in the spirit of reconciliation and community, neighbors and friends of the group members are also welcome to join to learn about Indigenous culture and life.

To preserve the intention of the 4Directions as a sharing circle, you can set up the people you support in small groups in the living room (maintaining the 6 feet/2 meter between people). Using the laptop, ipad or Smart TV along with reading the notes that follow, people can also be supported to explore the weekly program.

People can also work individually in their own room using their own devices if they choose that. When you begin, all you need to do is support people to read through the guide and pause to play the video links that are noted. Thank you.

Thank you for finding the courage to continue to share your gifts of caring and support with one another and your creativity to create meaningful experiences with people who you support.

Please touch base if you have any questions.

*Kind regards,
Andrew & Sheryll Ann*

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For assistance please contact (204) 256-4301.



May 14, 2020 – Remembering the Past and Preparing for the Future

Greetings to start the second gathering for this month of May. May you all find some new comforts as you settle into your new program routines. And may all the staff supporting this program find comfort and normalcy in the daily practice of changing their clothes before and after start of each shift! It is very good that we are all staying healthy together!!

Let us start the gathering with this [eagle song](#).

On November 26, 2012, the Government of Canada commemorated the Legacy of Indian Residential Schools through the dedication of a stained glass window in Parliament. The window is permanently installed in Centre Block on Parliament Hill.

The stained glass window in Centre Block of Parliament commemorates the legacy of former Indian Residential School students and their families, as well as the Prime Minister's historic Apology in 2008.

A five member selection committee comprised of leading Aboriginal art experts and former Indian Residential School students with First Nations, Métis and Inuit representation was established to oversee the artist selection process. The design of renowned Métis artist Christi Belcourt was unanimously selected by the committee.

The window was installed directly above the west door of Centre Block in October 2012 and presented to the Speaker of the House on November 26, 2012 in a dedication ceremony on Parliament Hill.

This permanent commemoration of the legacy of Indian Residential Schools and of the historic Apology will encourage Parliamentarians, as well as visitors to Parliament for generations to come, to learn about the history of Indian Residential Schools and Canada's reconciliation efforts.



Stained Glass Window in Parliament
Commemorating the Legacy of Indian
Residential Schools

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Activity:

Print a copy of this [stained glass window colouring book](#) and select a page to color. You can color while watching the playlist of videos from [here](#). Below is the explanation of the stained glass window.

Giniigaaniimenaaning (Looking Ahead) by Christi Belcourt

The window tells a story. It begins in the bottom left corner of the glass, moving upwards to the top panel and flowing down through the right panel. The title, "Giniigaaniimenaaning," includes the idea that we are all looking ahead for the ones unborn.

Left Glass Panel

The bottom section represents the time before residential schools existed. An ancestor smokes in the sacred lodge. From the west (represented by the button blanket motif) to the east (represented by the sky dome motif), Aboriginal ceremonies, languages and traditional knowledge were intact. Important ceremonies marking the transition from childhood to adulthood, such as the strawberry fast, were taught and practiced. Harvesting blueberries, learning about medicines and knowledge of plants and animals were passed from one generation to the next.

The middle section of the window depicting the children represents the "sad chapter" of the residential school era, where more than 150,000 children were forcibly removed from their homes and often subjected to physical and sexual abuses.

The shattered glass represents the breaking of the silence in the 1980s, as survivors from all over Canada began to speak openly about what happened to them at the schools. The broken glass also represents the shattered lives, families and communities that resulted from the government policy of forced assimilation. The Inuit drum dancer sounds the beginning of healing. The dove with the olive branch brings an offering of hope for the beginning of reconciliation and the renewal of the relationship between Aboriginal people and other Canadians.

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Top Glass Panel

This section commemorates the June 11, 2008, Apology offered by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in the House of Commons, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians.

In this panel, symbols representing Inuit (the ulu), First Nations (the eagle feathers) and the Métis Nation (the infinity symbol) are featured alongside the iconic maple leaf.

Right Glass Panel

The story continues in the top panel. In this panel, the jingle dress dancer is an Elder who is a former student of an Indian Residential School. She is dancing for the healing of all the people and for future generations.

In the middle panel, which represents present day, the young mother embraces her baby in a traditional moss bag. The child is back with her mother, representing children being raised by their parents and the breaking of the cycle of abuse. Within this panel are the words "I love you" and "I love you my child" written in Cree, Inuktitut, Anishnaabemowin and Mi'kmaq. The child's grandfather sings a traditional song signifying the restoration of songs, dance, ceremonies and languages.

Returning to the bottom, the circle is complete. The grandmother sits in the lodge smoking her pipe for her grandchildren. Ceremonies are being practiced and traditional knowledge about medicines is being taught. There is hope and a new respect for Aboriginal cultures within Canada as Aboriginal people are witness to their own strength and resilience.

Design within the Design – Mother Earth

Mother Earth is the foundation of the stained glass design, represented by the shape of a woman. Many Aboriginal traditions, culture, ceremonies and even way of life are based on connection with the land and interconnection with the spirit of the Earth.

About the Artist

Christi Belcourt (b. 1966) is a Métis visual artist with a deep respect for the traditions and knowledge of her people. Like generations of Aboriginal artists before her, she celebrates the beauty of the natural world while exploring nature's symbolic properties. Following

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the tradition of Métis floral beadwork, Belcourt paints in dots and uses the subject matter as metaphors for human existence to relay a variety of meanings that include concerns for the environment, biodiversity, spirituality and awareness of Indigenous cultures.

Closing: Let us acknowledge each person we support who have joined us in this gathering. May we all find time to thank each one another for the gift of time. [Here](#) is the [closing song to end the circle](#).

Meegwich.

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