

ACTIVITY: Purpose of Orange Shirt Day

Activity: Truth, Conversation, and Remembrance Stations

Grade Level: K-3

Overview

Students will rotate through three interactive stations, each reinforcing key concepts related to Orange Shirt Day. They will collect a stamp/sticker for each completed station on their Orange Shirt Stamp Card.

Purpose and Goals:

- To introduce the concept of “listening with an open mind and open heart” as a foundational skill for understanding important truths.
- To begin to understand why Orange Shirt Day is a time to remember and care about Indigenous children who went to residential school.
- To provide engaging, age-appropriate activities that foster conversation, truth-telling, and remembrance in a respectful way.
- To accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities through visual, auditory, and hands-on experiences.
- To understand the cultural importance of ways to respectfully listen to Elders and residential school Survivors.

Learning Objectives

- Students will identify and demonstrate what “listening with an open mind and open heart” looks like and sounds like.
- Students will participate in guided activities that introduce concepts of conversation, truth-telling, and remembering residential school Survivors.
- Students will contribute to a collective classroom understanding of why Orange Shirt Day is important.

Materials

- Orange Shirt Stamp Cards: Print-out cards shaped like an orange shirt, with three clear spots for stamps/stickers.
- Stamps or stickers (different designs for each station, if possible).
- Timer (optional, to help with transitions).
- Station signs (large and clear, with pictures).
 - **Station 1: The Conversation Corner**
 - Large picture cards showing good listening (e.g., eyes looking at speaker, calm body, quiet mouth) and poor listening (e.g., fidgeting, talking over someone).
 - Soft toy or “talking stick.”
 - **Station 2: Our Truths, Our Stories**
 - Orange construction paper squares (pre-cut, about 4x4 inches).
 - Crayons, markers.
 - Picture book that gently introduces residential school concepts (e.g., Phyllis’s Orange Shirt).

- **Station 3: Remembering Our Children**
 - Large paper outline of a child or a group of children.
 - Orange paper strips (pre-cut).
 - Glue sticks or tape.
 - Optional: Orange Shirt Day pictures/posters.

Duration

Approximately 20 minutes.

Lesson Steps

1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)

- Hand out the **Orange Shirt Stamp Cards**. Explain that they will visit three special stations about listening, truth, and remembering. For each station they visit and complete an activity, they will get a stamp on their card!
- Briefly explain the three stations (Conversation Corner, Our Truths/Our Stories, Remembering Our Children) and their focus.
- Explain the rotation process (e.g., small groups, direct students to their starting station).

2. Station Rotations (3-5 minutes per station x 3 stations = 9-15 minutes)

- Divide students into three groups and assign each group a starting station. Use a timer if desired to signal transitions.
- **Station 1: The Conversation Corner**
 - **Teacher Role:** Guide students.
 - **K-Grade 1:** Show picture cards of good/poor listening. Ask: "How does your body show you're listening with an open heart?"
 - **Grades 2-3:** Use a soft toy "talking stick." Explain its use for respectful sharing. The teacher starts by modelling a sentence about why listening is important for Orange Shirt Day. Students then briefly pass the stick, demonstrating listening.
 - **Stamp:** Stamp/sticker the Orange Shirt Card for participation.
- **Station 2: Our Truths, Our Stories**
 - **Teacher Role:** Facilitate the activity.
 - **All Grades:** Read a very short, carefully selected excerpt from an age-appropriate book about residential school experiences such as Phyllis's Orange Shirt, or state simply: "Orange Shirt Day is about listening to the true stories of Indigenous children who went to residential school. Sometimes these stories are sad, and it's brave to share them."
 - **K-Grade 1:** Students draw a simple picture on an orange square representing how they feel hearing a brave, important story.
 - **Grades 2-3:** Students draw one thing they remember or learned from the story/statement about residential schools, or what "truth" means in this context.
 - **Stamp:** Stamp/sticker the Orange Shirt Card upon completion.

- **Station 3: Remembering Our Children**

- **Teacher Role:** Guide students in creating the chain/quilt.
- **All Grades:** Explain Orange Shirt Day is about remembering the Indigenous children. Give each student an orange paper strip.
- **K-Grade 1:** Students write their name or draw a small symbol on their strip about why we remember.
- **Grades 2-3:** Students write a word or simple sentence on their strip about why we remember.
- **All Grades:** Students help connect their strip to others using glue or tape, forming a “memory chain” or “paper quilt” around a child outline.
- **Stamp:** Stamp/sticker the Orange Shirt Card once their strip is added.

3. Wrap-Up (Whole Class) (5 minutes)

- Gather all students. Have them hold up their completed **Orange Shirt Stamp Cards**.
- Briefly revisit each station’s focus: “What did we learn about conversation around Orange Shirt Day?” “What truths did we learn about residential schools in Canada?” “What about remembering the Indigenous children who were forced to go to these schools?”
- Thank them for their open hearts and minds, and reinforce that every day is a good day to listen, learn, and be kind.



**Circle of
Learning**