



FROM APOLOGY TO
RECONCILIATION

Appendix 5: Question Toolkit

APPENDIX 5: QUESTION TOOLKIT

Teachers may use questions from the Question Toolkit in a variety of ways:

- The “Before Viewing” questions may be used to determine student knowledge before beginning the study.
- Selected questions may be used as an activation strategy to introduce the topic of residential schools or to introduce subtopics such as “family,” “community,” “assimilation,” “culture”, etc.
- Selected questions may be used as an acquiring strategy to guide student inquiry.
- Selected questions may be used to assess and guide student learning.

Before Viewing

1. In the community you were born into, was there more than one culture? Was there a dominant culture? Were other cultures valued?
2. Who are Indigenous people? If you were born in another country, who were the Indigenous people? How are Indigenous people treated there?
3. Who are the Indigenous peoples of Canada?
4. What did you know or believe about Aboriginal (Indigenous) people before school? Where did your knowledge come from?
5. Has school changed those perceptions?
6. What were Indian residential schools?
7. What role does family play in your life?

After Viewing

Life before School

1. How does the life before residential school described by the survivors in the video compare to your own memories of life before school?
2. As pre-school age children, what were survivors’ hopes and expectations of school?

The School Experience

3. What do you think was the hardest aspect of the schools for new students?
4. “Regrettably, that’s where it ended because...I did not pass on any language or culture to them.” (Mary Courchene, survivor)
5. Why is it important to preserve the languages of cultural communities within Canadian society?

6. The purpose of the schools was “to kill the Indian in the child.” Why do you think governments and churches supported this idea?
7. According to the testimony of survivors, what was the effect on them of measures designed to kill the Indian in the child?
8. In your opinion, what was the worst abuse that survivors suffered?
9. “And that’s a lot of the things we had to do, was break rules in order to survive in there.” (Kathy Bird, survivor)
What survival strategies did survivors use?

The Legacy of Residential Schools

1. According to survivors, they were given little formal education. At least 50% of the school day was spent performing manual labour.
What would such an “education” prepare a person to do?
What should a good education give to a learner?
2. “During the 11 years I lived at that school, I was systematically stripped of dignity and pride, and I really hated myself for who I was, as an Indian.” (Mary Courchene, survivor)
How did Mary Courchene’s experiences at school affect her relations with her family?
3. What does the ability of some survivors to have successful careers as teachers and nurses and other professions say about them?
4. How were the children of survivors affected? (What are the intergenerational impacts of the residential school experience?)
5. What happens to children who have never had the guidance and love of parents and family, or the support of the community into which they were born, when they become adults?
6. “The people that gave up...are the people you see in the jails and on the street.” (Jesse Green)
7. What are the effects on a community that has suffered the loss of traditions, language, customs, and family structure?

Treaties

Notes

Currently, Manitoba First Nations, through the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, are working with governments to educate Manitobans about treaties and to renew and apply the terms of the treaties. How have treaties benefited all Canadians?

1. The treaties that were being negotiated in Western Canada at the same time as the *Indian Act* (1870s) promised schools on reserves that would prepare First Nations children for the future, while at the same time keeping them in their communities. However, many of the promises of the treaties were never fulfilled.
Why is it important that treaties be renewed and reinterpreted today?

Assimilationist Measures

2. Residential schools came out of the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* was enacted in 1876 without any input from First Nations. What were some of the other measures in the *Indian Act* that changed and controlled the lives of First Nations people?
3. What was the “sixties scoop?” Note: The “sixties scoop” lasted into the 1980s. How were its effects on the children who were adopted out of their communities, and often out of their cultures, similar to those of residential schools?

After the Apology

1. What groups were left out of the survivors’ settlement agreement?
2. Why do some survivors think that the apology was significant?
3. Why do some survivors believe the apology was meaningless?
4. Do you believe the apology is significant?
5. Although the last residential school closed in the 1990s, the effects remain. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit survivors, their families, and communities still suffer the effects of residential schools and similar assimilative practices. Why should all of us, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, care about the effects of residential schools?
6. Elder and survivor Garry Robson talks about the importance of this DVD. What do you think is the importance of the DVD and other educational initiatives that attempt to recount and explain the history of the relationship between Indigenous and other Canadians?

