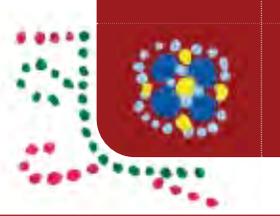


# Tips for Using this Guide



*Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces.*

*To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.*

—The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (Final Report, Volume I)



## Beyond Reading: Relationship Building

This dialogue guide is a self-contained kit to engage with others on themes related to justice, reconciliation, right relationships, and decolonization with Indigenous Peoples (see glossary, page 107) in what we now call Canada. It is designed for small-group discussions in community groups, unions, justice and peace committees, high schools, universities, faith communities, workplaces, and anywhere people can come together for dialogue.

This resource is designed to help participants learn more about the diverse Indigenous cultures of this land, unlearn stereotypes and misconceptions, explore the history of colonization that has marked relationships between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples, and seek ways to address that painful legacy—seeking pathways towards just and respectful relationships.

## A Process for Dialogue

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reminds us, we need to move beyond words to practise just and right relationships in our everyday lives. Engaging in meaningful, open dialogue can be an important step for moving from words to action.

The process of sharing and dialogue is not an intellectual exercise, but rather one of getting to know one another, building trust, sharing what we're thinking and feeling, and confronting the painful legacy that lives on today.

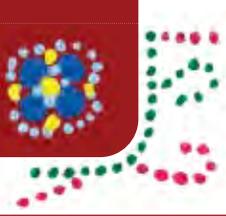
The use of sharing circles is common in many traditional cultures, including most Indigenous cultures of this land. These circles promote deep listening, personal engagement, and discernment rather than debate or planning.

We are invited to listen deeply to the reflections and stories shared by various Indigenous authors. We also need to listen deeply and attentively to one another and engage in how the readings touch us and call us to transformation.

At times, it can be difficult to hear these stories, particularly those marked by pain and anger; yet it is important to remain open, to listen with empathy rather than defensiveness.

Throughout the process, learnings and reflections emerge—not only from what is written in this guide, but from the personal experiences of the participants of the sharing circles.

The process can foster creativity and possibilities for justice and reconciliation. Often, there is a tendency to debate or seek clear, simple solutions. Our process here is not to argue or to defend our own points of view, but to listen, particularly to voices that may often have gone unheard, and to open ourselves to new ideas, hope, and transformation.



# Tips for Using this Guide

## Some Key Goals

- Increase knowledge about the diverse Indigenous Peoples of what is now called Canada, including their values, teachings, understandings of land, spirituality, community, and relationships: What can we learn from these? How might they transform our relationships with each other and the living land?
- Explore the history, practices, and underlying ideas of colonization in Canada—in particular, the history of dispossession, dependence, oppression, exploitation, and genocide. What can we learn from this history?
- Open ourselves to a transformation—or *metanoia* (turning of the heart)—that seeks to redress past wrongs and move towards relationships based on respecting and celebrating diversity, addressing injustice, sharing and caring for the land, and engaging in person-to-person relationships with local Indigenous people. What do we need to lament, how do we disentangle past injustices, and what needs to change in the future?
- Explore concrete pathways towards right relationships, decolonization, and re-indigenization: How can we become respectful, supportive allies?

***This process is intended to deepen the process of reflection that many groups have begun using the KAIROS Blanket Exercise. If your group has not yet done this exercise, please do so sometime before session two.***

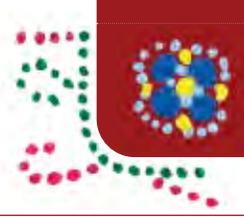
🌐 See: <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/>



Tim Paul, Owl's Path Media.

Artist Tim Paul explains that the Earthquake relative was sent to teach humility and remind human beings of the all-encompassing power of the Creator.





## A Simple Process

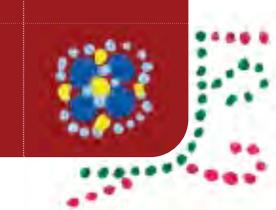
- Participants will arrive having read the material for the session and having viewed any videos that are part of it. If people don't have time to read everything, we encourage them to focus on the first reading or video presented.
- Arrange chairs in a circle for sharing. It may be helpful to have a small table with a lit candle or symbols to serve as a focal point.
- The leader welcomes everyone and begins each session with a land acknowledgement appropriate to your area. (See the box entitled "Sample Land Acknowledgement" on p. 14 for more details.)
- In faith communities, the leader may wish to begin with a short prayer. Some groups may also find it helpful to read the Haudenosaunee Greeting found in session 3 (p. 32).
- It's a good idea for the leader to note that the circle is a safe space for sharing, based on mutual respect.
- The leader provides a brief summary of the session. They could also use one of the quotes, stories, or images to help set the context.
- Use the questions at the end of each session as a guide to stimulate sharing and dialogue.
- Listening is key to dialogue. Limit each participant's sharing to a few (2 to 3) minutes to keep the momentum going. We recommend sharing in rounds, with each person taking a turn answering the questions at the end of the session.
- It is helpful to pass an object from person to person as you speak in turn. Using a wireless microphone for this purpose is particularly useful, since it not only signals who has the word, but also makes it easier for all to hear that speaker, making the space more inclusive.
- Everyone has something to share, regardless of experience, education, or position, and everyone's input is needed.
- For the first part of your meeting, it's best to listen to each other first and to move to open discussion later.
- Before each round, you could take a moment of silence to allow people to gather their thoughts. This will encourage reflective sharing rather than debate.
- Close with a quote from the session. Agree on the date and time for the next session.
- For more information about how to gather a group, prepare for a session, or adapt for use online, see [ltiv.ca/i/](http://ltiv.ca/i/).



*Yellow Sun Chief*, Tim Paul.



*Moon Chief White Face*, Tim Paul.



## Getting to Know Each Other

Before beginning the first session in this guide, gather the group together to explain the process and begin to get to know each other using the following questions:



1. Introduce yourself, placing more emphasis on your personal story rather than what you do. It helps to include an experience that has marked your life significantly.
2. In whose traditional territory did your grandmother or grandfather (choose one) live? How did they come to be there? What is your own relationship to that territory today?
3. Why are you interested in being part of this process? What brought you here? What do you hope to learn?
4. What does reconciliation mean for you?

## Spiritual Reflections

We also provide reflections from a variety of spiritual and ethical traditions online that can be used in faith communities and spirituality groups. We also welcome additional contributions. See: [ltiv.ca/spiritual/](http://ltiv.ca/spiritual/)

## Sample Land Acknowledgement

*Check the websites of local universities and similar institutions to see if they have a land acknowledgement that is appropriate for your context. Or simply adapt the following acknowledgement to use in your sessions.*

“Welcome to the session. We begin by acknowledging the traditional territory upon which we gather today. For many thousands of years, the (name the nation or nations) have sought to walk gently and respectfully on this land. [If applicable]: Through (name of treaty), we entered into a sacred covenant with these nations and peoples. We recommit ourselves to honouring our obligations and responsibilities as treaty people. At the same time, we seek a renewed relationship with the Indigenous Peoples of this land, one based on honour and deep respect.”

See: [ltiv.ca/1/](http://ltiv.ca/1/) to find a list of the peoples who have traditionally inhabited the territory where you meet.

## Classroom Connections



Each session includes some suggestions for activities and assignments that can be used in a classroom setting. These suggestions are appropriate for high school or post-secondary settings. Some non-school groups may also find these activities helpful if they are looking for ideas for further engagement.

Teachers are encouraged to visit [ltiv.ca](http://ltiv.ca) for additional materials related to each classroom exercise. We ask teachers to send us suggestions that we can add to our online supplementary resources.



**Trigger warnings:** Some of the readings, images, or videos presented might include graphic references to topics such as sexual abuse, self-harm, violence, or other subjects that may cause trauma to readers. We’ve signalled these by adding this icon at the beginning of the reading or activity.

## References

Detailed references for each session are available at: [ltiv.ca/refs/](http://ltiv.ca/refs/)