



REMEMBER

- The words Aboriginal or Indigenous are all-encompassing terms that includes First Nations, Metis and Inuit. "Indigenous" is the term of choice for the government of Canada, but the best idea is to ask what title they and their family uses to define themselves and what word they prefer others using.
- Spirituality is woven into daily life for all Indigenous peoples, but can often be seen in the form of ceremonies, song, dance, clothing, and in connection to the earth.
- Indigenous people pass on history, values, teaching, purpose, and so much more orally. They are master storytellers and tell stories as well through many artistic forms.
- Indigenous people are often communal in nature and are natural community developers.
- Humour is often a way Indigenous people interact with one another. It is not always appreciated from non-indigenous peoples as we often do not understand the context. Joke about yourself and your culture - and if they laugh with you, appreciate their acceptance.



RECOGNIZE

- Canada has a dark, tumultuous history with Indigenous peoples, leaving a wound that is slowly being recognized. Understanding the historical context is crucial to understanding the present condition.
- Colonization and epidemics decimated almost entire nations, robbing indigenous peoples of their land, rights, and culture.
- The government enacted treaties, policies, and laws (ex. Indian Act) without consent from Indigenous peoples. These laws still affect their access to health care, education, housing, clean drinking water, and other basic rights.
- Indigenous children were forcibly taken from their families, placed in Residential Schools, and 'assimilated' through the elimination of language, culture, and spirituality. Abuse and neglect were common and roughly 6000 children died. The intergenerational trauma still affects Indigenous families today.
- Despite past horrors and current struggles, Indigenous peoples are resilient, have overcome many hardships and continue to fight for change today.
- In Canada there are over 634 Indigenous Nations with over 70 distinct languages.



RESPOND

- You can make a difference by encouraging a better understanding of Aboriginal culture in your Church, community, and the culture at large. There is still a lot of racism and ignorance about Indigenous culture and people. This affects their experiences day to day. You can make difference in this by advocating and doing what you can to stop acts of racism.
- Build relationships for the right reasons with Indigenous people. Loving and genuine friendships with other people are one of the most important parts of sharing the gospel with anyone. If we want to spread God's love it is necessity for it to be done in the context of genuine relationship – especially with a people group who value community, family, hospitality and laughter. Pray for God to bring genuine relationship to you, seek to be open and honest in that relationship and try to understand the culture that they come from without needing to fix anything
- If welcome, attend Indigenous events with your children, friends, and community. Many are open to the public and are a way for you to continually be learning.
- Don't appropriate (take for your own use) their culture, traditions, or art. It is very disrespectful for non-indigenous people to do dances, carving, or the running of ceremonies, especially because these things are often taken to make money or fulfill your own cultural needs.
- Actively support Indigenous social services through partnering, advocating, or volunteering.



UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS YOUTH

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resources



RESOURCES

Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis & Inuit Issues in Canada, Chelsea Vowel

First Nations 101: tons of stuff you need to know about First Nations people, Lynda Gray