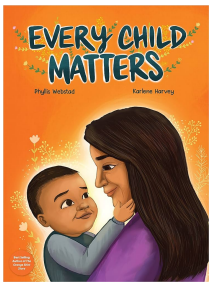
Every Child Matters

Lesson Plan



Author: Phyllis Webstad

Illustrator: Karlene Harvey

Grade: K-3

"Stand up for what you believe. Just having that strong determination can make other people join you in your struggle." - Silvia Carrera

Teacher Reflections:

Book Summary:

This story explores Phyllis's experience at Residential School and how she learned that despite what the world around her said, she matters. In fact Every Child Matters, Residential School Survivor, Intergenerational Survivors, children that didn't make it home, the child in each of us matters. Orange Shirt Day founder, Phyllis Webstad, offers insights into the heartfelt movement. Every Child Matters honours the history and resiliency of Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island and helps introduce the path of Truth and Reconciliation to children in an age-appropriate way.

Teacher's Notes:

Resources:

Pre-Reading Questions:

1. What is Turtle Island?
2. What do you know about the first people that lived all across Turtle Island?
3. What does immemorial mean?
4. title of the book

Activities:

Activity 1: The Word Indigenous-Explained (Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion)

Watch and discuss the CBC Kids News video about the word Indigenous.

While Reading

Questions:

1. What does the book tell/show us about how Indigenous cultures have been celebrated, practiced and honoured since time immemorial?
2. What things were taken away from and forbidden by Indigenous children at Residential Schools?
3. What happened to Phyllis when she arrived at Residential School? How did she feel?
4. What are Residential Schools? How are they different from the school you attend?
5. Phyllis returned home to her family after 300 nights. Did all Indigenous children return home from Residential School like Phyllis?
5. What did attending Residential School make Phyllis question about herself? What does she know now?

Activities:

Activity 2: Medicine Wheel Story-Bag (Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion)
Introduce the teachings of the Medicine Wheel and the four elements before going on a mindful walk outside to collect things representing the various elements. As a class, you will then co-create a story about life, the four elements and the interconnectedness of all things by using the things you have collected on your walk (mad libs style).

Activity 3: Indigenous Languages (Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion)
Visit First Voices and explore the page associated with a nearby nation or community, or one students in your class are connected to. There are games, songs and kids sections in addition to information about that state of language and the Nations' priorities around language for you to discuss as a class.

Post-Reading

Questions:

1. What lesson is Phyllis trying to teach us with this story?
2. What do you think the purpose of Residential Schools was? What parts of the story led you to think that?
3. What is resilience? Despite the history of Residential Schools, in what ways are Indigenous peoples and nations continuing to demonstrate their resilience?
4. Why is Orange Shirt Day important for all children?

Activities:

Activity 4: Interview with Phyllis Webstad (Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion)
Watch the CBC Kids News video where Phyllis Webstad answers kids questions. Discuss what they thought about the kids questions and Phyllis's responses and what else they would ask Phyllis if they could.

Activity 5: Orange Shirt Day Affirmations (Individual)
Students will write or draw a positive affirmation inspired by Every Child Matters in a self-drawn or cut out t-shirt. Discuss the students creations and then put them on display in your classroom.