



# CHILDREN'S LESSON: Every Child Matters

## **SAY:**

September 30th has been declared as Orange Shirt Day, a day when we acknowledge the harm that the residential school system did to many Indigenous children's sense of self-esteem and well being. Many children were left feeling as if they, their identity, their culture, their language, their customs, their names, their families, etc. had no value or worth. They were treated poorly and were left feeling like they didn't matter at all. Nobody should ever be made to feel like this. We use this day to listen, to learn, and to commit to doing our part to make sure that everyone around us knows that they matter. As Christians, we believe that every person is loved and valued by God, and should be loved and valued by us. We are responsible to love other people the way that God loves us.

## **READ or WATCH:**

Orange Shirt Day is inspired by the story of Phyllis Webstad, who spent a year at the Mission residential school when she was just 6 years old. Here's her story in her own words:

Read Phyllis' story in English and French here: <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/phyllis-story.html> or watch her tell it herself at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3vUqr01kAk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3vUqr01kAk).

## **LEARN:**

Phyllis said she felt like she didn't matter to anyone. That's very sad, isn't it? No one should ever have to feel like that. This is the complete opposite of how God feels about us, how he wants us to feel about ourselves, and how he wants us to feel about others.

*(Bring a selection of loonies (or another same value coin or bill) to show the kids during the lesson. Make sure you have an older and newer version (different years), both a shiny and dull version (different colours), a regular mint coin and a special edition (different designs), etc.).*

Let's take a look at these coins I brought with me today. I'll hold each one up and you tell me how much it's worth, ok? (Hold each loonie up and point out that they have value, they are each worth \$1. If there's time, ask kids to share something they could buy with \$1). These coins are valuable! They are worth something. They matter.

## LEARN (cont'd):

God says that we have value too! We are worth something. We matter. Listen to his words from Isaiah 49:15-16:

*"I, God, will never forget you. Look here. I have made you a part of me, written you on the palms of my hands. You... are always on my mind, always my concern."*

God is saying that **you matter** and **have value!**

Now, take a look at my coins again. *Hold up an old coin and a new coin and point out the dates.* Does it make a difference if a coin is old or new? Does the value change? *(No, they are both still valued the same - \$1).* *Hold up a shiny coin and a dull coin.* Does it make a difference if the coin is shiny or dull? Does its appearance or colour change the value? *(No, they are both still valued the same - \$1).* *Repeat for the regular mint coin and the special edition, leading to the same conclusion that the design doesn't change the value.*

*[Optional: Depending on your time and setting, for a more personal application, ask kids to think about themselves as you discuss the value of the coins. Having kids volunteer to share their thoughts could lead to some deeper discussion on value here. "Would you put yourself in the category of old or new?"... "Would you see yourself as a shiny coin or a dull coin and what makes you think so?"... "Do you relate more to the ordinary coin or the fancy designed one?"...]*

Some people think that certain people are more valuable than other people. That is simply not true. Listen to what the bible has to say about that:

Romans 2:11: *"God doesn't have any favourites!"*

Galatians 3:26-29: *"You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Now, in Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek. There is no difference between slaves and free men. There is no difference between male and female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. You belong to Christ."*

That's pretty simple! In God's eyes **everyone matters** and **has the same value!**

When we follow Jesus, what matters to him should matter to us. That means that justice, kindness, loving others, treating people fairly and with respect, valuing people and helping them know they matter should all be really important to us.





## COMMIT:

Print the “Every Child Matters” T-shirt template on orange paper, or have kids colour it orange themselves. Encourage them to think of someone they know that might not feel very valuable right now. Have them think of a way they can help that person know that they matter this week and write it on the T-shirt, committing to doing their part to make sure that everyone knows they matter to God and to us!

## PRAY:

God, thank you for your love for us. Thank you that you value us, and that we matter to you, and that nothing can take that away from us. Help us to always love and value other people the way that you do. Help us to listen, to learn and to love. Amen.





**EVERY  
CHILD  
MATTERS!**



This week,  
I will help

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know that they matter by

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