

## CIRCLE 2

### 8<sup>th</sup> Fire, Episode 1: Indigenous in the City

*Society will be transformed for the better when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people develop a new understanding of each other and build a new relationship founded on mutual respect and love of neighbour. Healing is required to overcome the legacy of misunderstanding.*

This second session takes us deeper into the issues we experienced in the Blanket Exercise. It invites us to explore how our understanding of Indigenous Peoples might be incomplete or shallow. It explores the message that, unless we engage in relationships with our Indigenous neighbours and embrace our mutual interdependence, efforts for reconciliation, healing and justice will not reach their full potential. The discussion of prejudices and stereotypes must be facilitated deftly. This exercise touches on sensitive topics related to racism, so defensiveness is a common reaction. We have aimed for an invitational approach, suggesting that we look for a more vivid understanding of Indigenous Peoples and challenge the simplistic stereotypes through engagement with people and their stories.

#### Themes

Prejudices and stereotypes; identity; getting to know your neighbours

#### Objectives

To encourage participants to consider how their understandings of Indigenous Peoples might be incomplete. To explore how we understand our own identities as a way to appreciate and respect the dignity and identity of others' and, as a result, stress the significance of relationships in the formation of our allegiances and values.

#### Timing

5 min.	Welcome & Overview
5 min.	Opening Prayer
10 min.	What are Stereotypes (a warm up exercise)?
45 min.	8 <sup>th</sup> Fire, Episode 1: "Indigenous in the City"
20 min.	Sharing Circle
3 min.	What Does This Mean For My Life?
2 min.	Closing and Prayer

#### Materials

- [Handout Circle 2](#)

- pen, 1/ participant
- computer and television or screen
- Portrait series fights stereotypes about Aboriginal People:
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/portrait-series-fights-stereotypes-about-aboriginal-people-1.2742330?cmp=rss>
- 8<sup>th</sup> Fire, Episode 1: “Indigenous in the City”

### Preparation

- Print Handout Circle 2, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/participant
- Set up audio-visual technology and test it
- Set up the room in circle of chairs, 1/participant
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.



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## Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

### Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory.

### Step 2

Share the theme of this workshop and an overview of your time together:

- Welcome & Overview
- Opening Prayer
- What are Stereotypes (a warm up exercise)?
- *8<sup>th</sup> Fire, Episode 1: "Indigenous In the City"*
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing and Prayer

Stress that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*.

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## Opening Prayer | 5 min.

Start by praying the prayer below.

Creator God,  
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness  
as we seek your holy way.  
Purify our minds  
and let them be guided by your Word.  
Give sight to our eyes  
so that we may see others as you have seen them.  
Open our ears  
so that we may listen for your voice.  
Guide our mouths  
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.  
Humble our hearts  
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.  
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth  
and may we love you with all our strength  
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

## What Are Stereotypes | 10 min.

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Pass out the handout.

### Step 1

Introduce this warm-up task by stating how human beings often think and talk in stereotypes. The reality is that we all have certain stereotypes of each other. Some come out of real experience but much does not. What are some of the common stereotypes we hear from society about different cultural groups?

### Step 2

Share the photos from “Portrait series fights stereotypes about Aboriginal People”<sup>1</sup> on a screen at the front of the room.

### Step 3

Then, in pairs ask them to discuss the following questions:

- *What came to mind for you when you saw this photo series?*
- *What does it say about stereotyping people?*

### Step 4

Let’s end our warm up with this quote from Kent Nerburn. It is also found on your handout:

*But those echoes are not to be found in the myths and false images upon which we have been raised. The drunken Indian, the vicious savage, the noble wiseman, and the silent earth-mother are all products of our historical imagination. We do the Indian people no honor by dehumanizing them into such neat and simple packages. The real Indian people laugh, cry, make mistakes, honor their Creator, get angry, go to stores, raise children.... And it is in the real Indian people, not in the myths and images, that the true voices of our land can be heard.*

-Kent Nerburn, *Neither Dog nor Wolf* (New World Library: Novato, California, 2002): 5

- *What came to mind for you as you were listening?*

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<sup>1</sup> CBD Manitoba news, August 20 2014

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/portrait-series-fights-stereotypes-about-aboriginal-people-1.2742330?cmp=rss>

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## 8<sup>th</sup> Fire, Episode 1 | 45 min.

### Step 1

Introduce Episode 1 of “8<sup>th</sup> Fire” by sharing:

*What we are about to watch begins to challenge the stereotypes we have about Indigenous Peoples. You will come face to face with a variety of folks living very distinct lives. You will also hear how these people are struggling to come to terms with their own identities. As you are watching this film, think about the ways in which you might respond to persistent prejudice and discrimination if you were in their shoes.*

### Step 2

Watch the 45 minute film in silence.

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## Sharing Circle | 20 min.

### Step 1

Invite everyone to the circle and review how it works.

### Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and time it takes you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the question below:

- *What has this video clip made you realize about yourself and Aboriginal People?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *What did this video tell you about your way of living and interacting with the world around you?*
- *What is coming to mind for you about “getting to know your neighbours”, one of the themes of this film?*

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## What Does This Mean for My Life | 3 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to write on their handout in the box “What Does This Mean for My Life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

## Closing and Prayer | 2 min.

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### Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell them about Circle 3:

*Next week's session the ways in which the broken relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in this country should be fixed. It challenges past approaches and will remind us that there are no easy answers – that reconciliation is a challenging and important journey.*

### Step 2

Close the session by reading the handout “A Prayer of Confession” together:

#### **A Prayer of Confession**

God of new beginnings,  
Be with us as we take this step  
On a reconciliation journey.

We bring before you O God, the hurt and suffering of so many at Indian Residential Schools. Though we want to say—we were not there, we didn't do it—still we cannot absolve ourselves of blame. For the Church is the body of Christ and we are his arms and legs, his mouth and feet. We speak, walk, and act on Jesus' behalf. So when the churches in Canada have sinned we all bear the mark. We all share the guilt.

We ask your forgiveness, God, as we come to understand the results of our church's and nation's failures toward Aboriginal People: we see the damaged lives, devastated by the disease of alcoholism, unable to escape the grip of poverty, sometimes caught in a cycle of violence and abuse—and we are sorry beyond the words to tell it. We wish we could go back and do things differently, but the river of life flows in one direction only. No matter what we wish for, we must make the best of the situation we have now.

We thank you, God, for your generous gift of forgiveness that makes every day the possibility of a new beginning. May this gift help us to begin to heal and make new connections, as Jesus would have, with our Aboriginal sisters and brothers. May we be fearless and unafraid as your children. Give us the courage to face those from whom we so often turn away. Let us live with a deep abiding respect for all your children, and for

your wondrous, beautiful, matchless creation, O Great Creator.

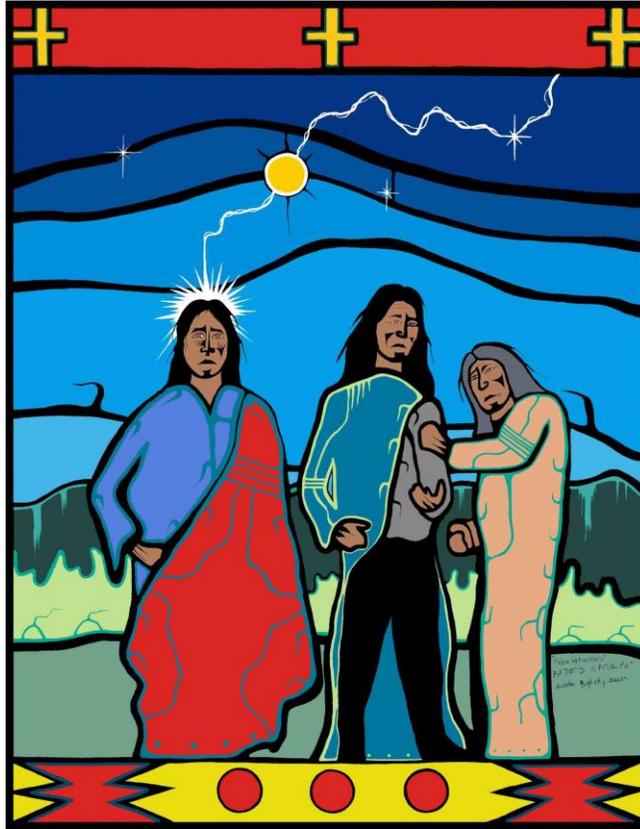
God of new beginnings,  
Be with us as we take this step  
On our journey together—toward reconciliation.

Amen

—based on *Toward Truth and Reconciliation* from the United Church of Canada

# Handouts

## CIRCLE 2



What this means for me...

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