



## Circles for Reconciliation Gathering Theme

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### Opening Guidelines for In-Person Circles

#### *Instructions:*

*The first item for the Opening Guidelines is a land acknowledgement. You might benefit from having a different person read the land acknowledgement each week. Indigenous people may live in a city but have their home band elsewhere and may wish to acknowledge their First Nation land. **The participants only read the land acknowledgement, while the rest of the Opening Guidelines is the responsibility of the facilitator.***

1. Treaty 1 example: “I would like to acknowledge that we are in Treaty #1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree and Dakota as well as the birthplace of the Métis Nation and the Heart of the Métis Homeland.” (**Adjust for your region of the country – see examples below**).
2. Following the presentation of the topic for today, a general discussion will follow. A different theme is presented during each of the ten weeks: Today’s topic will be “[INSERT].” Following the presentation of the theme, a general discussion will follow with each of you being given an opportunity to speak to the issue. You are encouraged to keep the seven sacred teachings of the Anishinaabe in your thoughts and words.
3. (*Instruction: The Seven Sacred Teachings are then read aloud by one of the facilitators or one of the participants.*)

LOVE: it is important to care for one another

HONESTY: better to fail with honesty than succeed by fraud

RESPECT: give it, earn it, receive it

TRUTH: it is always easiest to speak the truth

HUMILITY: to be humble about your accomplishments is to be strong

COURAGE: let nothing stand in the way of doing the right thing

WISDOM: with hard work and dedication will come knowledge

*(Instruction: You do not need to read the following sentences verbatim each week but do address the content informally.)*

4. When sharing around the Circle, clockwise is recommended. Should you wish to “pass” at that time, you will be given a chance at the end to offer your thoughts. While you may not wish to speak at all on a given week, your participation is valuable as each individual has gifts to offer the Circle.

5. An item, such as a talking stick, will be passed around giving each person a chance to speak. Speak on behalf of yourself only and speak what comes from your heart and from your own experience.
6. To non-Indigenous participants, reflect on the statement of Chief Commissioner Murray Sinclair: “Do not feel ashamed of the past; do not feel guilty. They don’t do any good at all. Do something about it!”
7. It is very important that we all recognize that the feelings of an individual are neither right nor wrong. They are real and need to be respected.
8. In accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, the four guiding principles for the new relationship are “mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing, and mutual responsibility” (Interim Report, page 23).
9. We ask you to be conscious of your sharing time so that everyone has a chance to participate. Because we have a number of gatherings, you will have ample opportunity to share your ideas and feelings. We will have to bring closure to our circle at (...o’clock).

## **Examples of Regions**

Treaty 7, Alberta: I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Olds College as being located on the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikuni, the Kainai, the Tsuu T’ina and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations. The area is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

Thunder Bay: I would like to acknowledge that we are in Thunder Bay—traditional home of the Fort William First Nation Ojibwa community, located on the land of the Robinson Superior Treaty.

Dryden: I would like to acknowledge that we are in Dryden, Ontario—traditional lands of the Anishinaabe recognized through Treaty #3.

Toronto: We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.