

# Seniors Curriculum:

# INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS THE FIRST AUSTRALIANS

## Indigenous Australians, the First Australians

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### Theme

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**This guide is for a meeting to learn more about Indigenous Australians. This name refers to the Nations First People and includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**

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### Date

In May each year there is a national Sorry day where our nation remembers and acknowledges the suffering of indigenous Australians over the years since white settlement. Maybe you could choose a date for your meeting close to this event and focus on learning more about the first Australians.

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### Décor

Have some aboriginal art on the walls. Print copies of the attached reconciliation painting that was painted for the Salvos by Cindy Also and have either a copy for everyone of put it up on the wall.

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### Guests

Invite an indigenous Australian or someone working with Indigenous communities to come and share their story.

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### Welcome and Acknowledgement of traditional owners of the land

You might have noticed at public gatherings it is more common these days for someone to acknowl-

edge the traditional owners of the land. This is a sign of respect and it is appropriate for speakers at public events to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the place at the beginning of their speeches. For example, "I would respectfully like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land [add the name of the tribe here if you know it] on which this event is taking place". You might like to start your meeting with this acknowledgement.

- Watch the DVD where Judith explains the importance of this acknowledgement plus the place of welcome to country.
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### Introduction and theme

Indigenous peoples had inhabited the Australian continent for up to 60 000 years before European settlers arrived. They had complex social systems and highly developed traditions reflecting a deep connection with the land. Across the continent Indigenous peoples spoke hundreds of different languages and dialects and had diverse cultural practices. The cultures and traditions of Australia's Indigenous peoples are integral to contemporary Australian society and go to the heart of our identity as a modern nation state with a rich and ancient heritage.

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### Listen and learn

Using the, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness DVD from The Salvation Army watch the following clips from Judith to help understand issues of Indigenous Australians a little better

- Are the specific do's and don'ts that people

should know when ministering to Indigenous Australians? (3min 30sec)

- How important is reconciliation to ministry with Indigenous people? (1min 55sec)
  - How can I connect with Aboriginal people? (3min)
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#### Or watch Vince

- How do the spiritual beliefs of Indigenous Australian fit with Christianity? (7min)
  - What role does the church play in reconciliation? (2min)
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#### Famous Indigenous Australians

Use the attached power-point presentation as a quiz and information guide to famous Indigenous Australians.

Please note, there is an Aboriginal tradition not to depict dead people or voice their (first) names. This is very old, traditional law across Australia said that a dead person's name could not be said because you would recall and disturb their spirit. Not everyone follows these laws, but out of respect to those Indigenous Australians who still hold these beliefs media outlets usually inform us of any upcoming images of deceased Indigenous Australians. This power-point also includes such a warning:

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#### Spirituality

Most Indigenous belief systems centre on the 'Dreaming' or 'Dreamtime' to explain life and the origin of the world. In the Dreaming, ancestral beings created features of the land, sea and sky, as well as humans, animals and plants. The Dreaming describes the actions and travels of these beings, some of whom were themselves transformed into features of the landscape, like the Three Sisters rock formation in the Blue Mountains.

Play a clip about the stories of the dreamtime from the Australian Museum website <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Stories-of-the-Dreaming>

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#### Some current issues

Print off or read from the attached Australian Government fact sheet about Indigenous Australians, especially considering the issues such as

Reconciliation, the Stolen generation, Education, health and housing.

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#### Devotions

- Watch Arnolds story from the DVD. (2min 20sec)
  - See the attached sheet of bible readings and prayer for the 2010 National sorry day from the National Council of churches. The 2011 guide should be available on their website closer to the May 26th Sorry day of 2011.
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#### Where to from here?

TEAR Australia, a Christian network offer an extensive and helpful kit for churches and bible study groups called the reconciliation resource kit. The link to this is below. There are great prayer, bible study and action ideas.

<http://www.tear.org.au/downloads/resources/resourceKitReconciliation.pdf>

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#### A couple more Salvation Army resources

- See attached copy of the Pipeline (Eastern Territory magazine) published for reconciliation week 2010
- See the attached Media release for The Salvation Army's welcome for the Apology in 2008.
- Watch the other clips on the DVD