**Prayer Service for Orange Shirt Day September 30th, 2016**

**Preparation prior to the prayer service-**1) encourage all students to wear an orange shirt on September 30th. 2) Distribute orange paper to each student. Have them trace their hand on the paper and then cut it out. Have them put their name on the paper and then write one thing they can do this school year to love their neighbour as yourself. 3) Choose one student to share what he/she has written on his/her hand at the prayer service.

**Introduction-** Does anyone know what the theme is for this school year? (allow students to answer). That’s right. It is “Love Your Neighbour as Yourself.” Jesus told us that we should love our neighbour as ourself and we try very hard in our school to do that. Unfortunately, this wasn’t always the case in some of our Catholic schools. Not that long ago, there were schools called residential schools that our First Nations brothers and sisters were forced to attend. They were treated very poorly and made to feel that they didn’t matter. Today our prayer service will focus on how poorly our First Nations brothers and sisters have been treated and how we are called to show them that they do matter and that they are loved by God and by us.

1. **Opening Prayer**-Let us begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Loving God, your holy word tells us that we are so precious in your sight that you know how many hairs are on our head. Thank you so much for loving us that much. Help us to spread your love to others so that they will know how precious they are in your sight. Amen.
2. **Gospel-**A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew

Then little children were being brought to Jesus in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them;

 but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."  And he laid his hands on them, blessed them and went on his way.

The Gospel of the Lord. Response-**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**.

1. **Reflection**-the gospel story we just heard from Matthew is also repeated in Mark’s and Luke’s gospels. Very few of Jesus’ stories are in more than one gospel. This means that this story is very important. Jesus loved children and didn’t want anyone-not even his disciples to prevent them from coming to him. Jesus wanted every child to know that he loves them and that they matter. Sadly, there have been times when adults-even in Catholic schools-have not shown Jesus’ love to First Nations’ children and have made them feel like they didn’t matter. We will now watch a video about a woman named Phyllis. When Phyllis was six years old and was just starting school, something happened that made her feel that she didn’t matter. The video will explain why we wear orange shirts on this day.
2. **Video-** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll1pUrK29MM&feature=youtu.be**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll1pUrK29MM&feature=youtu.be)
3. **Penitential Rite-**though you probably have never stopped to count, there are seven times during mass that we ask God for forgiveness for the things we have done wrong. That’s how important saying sorry and asking for forgiveness is. God will always forgive us but God asks us to make up for the things we have done wrong. Today we will tell God that we are sorry for the way that First Nations people like Phyllis have been treated by the Church. The response to each statement is Lord, have mercy.

For the times we have made First Nations people feel like they didn’t matter. Lord, have Mercy. **Response-Lord, have Mercy**.

For the times we have treated First Nations people as if they were not precious in God’s sight. Lord, have Mercy. **Response-Lord, have Mercy**.

For the times that we have not treated First Nations people with the respect and dignity they deserve as beloved children of God. Lord, have Mercy. **Response-Lord, have Mercy**.

Loving God, we are sorry that we have not always loved our neighbour as ourself, especially when we have not loved our First Nations brothers and sisters the way we should. Forgive us and strengthen us that through our words and actions we may show that we are truly sorry for our actions. Amen.

1. **Orange Hand Ritual**-We have asked all students to trace their hand on orange paper and then write on it one thing they can do “love your neighbour as yourself.” When you go back to your classroom, your teacher will help you to post these hands around the room. They will help remind us to love each other as Jesus wants us to. I would now like to call up one student from each grade to read what he/she has written on his/her hand.
2. **Closing Prayer**-God of all nations, we thank you for the gift of all people. On this day, we especially thank you for the gift of First Nations People. Help us to love our neighbour as ourself so that everyone at our school would know that they matter, that they are important and that they are loved by us and by you. We make our prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.