

SORRY DAY 2008

Action Resource:

Stolen Generations Track Home

A SYMBOLIC ACTION

*On Sorry Day in 2006 the Journey of Healing ACT planted 1200 red, black and yellow plastic feet up Commonwealth and Kings Avenue, creating a corridor toward National Parliament House. The track of feet was called the **Stolen Generations Dreaming Track** toward the 54 Recommendations.*

The National Sorry Day Committee has adopted this action symbolizing the quest of the Stolen Generations to find their way home, and the ongoing search by Indigenous families for their stolen children.

This year *The Stolen Generations Track Home* will represent a new direction toward the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report being fulfilled. It will express visually the new beginning the apology has given for all Australians to move forward together.

Parishes, schools, communities and groups are invited to make their own *Stolen Generations Track Home* to mark Sorry Day in 2008.

This Action Resource Sheet is intended to assist you in participating in the *Stolen Generations Track Home* action.

FIND YOUR FEET

The National Sorry Day Committee is selling two kinds of sets of feet for planting a *Stolen Generations Track Home*:

1. The 'flag set' contains six sets of feet in the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait flags.
2. The 'recommendations set' contains 54 feet, one for each of the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report.

The feet are held on a metal stake so that they can be planted with the feet above the ground. They also have double sided tape attached to the back so that they can be fixed to walls and windows.

Sets of feet can be ordered from

http://www.nsdcc.org.au/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&page=shop.browse&category_id=7&Itemid=5

DESIGN YOUR EVENT

Here are some questions and suggestions to consider in planning your event.

- Do you want to invite participants to plant the feet to make the track, or to follow a track that has already been planted in advance? Consider the space available to you and the nature of your group.
- Will there be a focus event on or around Sorry Day or will the track simply be installed for people to use for individual reflection over a specified period e.g. 26 May – 2 June?
- Is it possible to invite a local Elder to give a Welcome to Country for your event? If not, make sure you know whose land you will be on so that you can make an Acknowledgement of Country.
- How will you recall the journeys of the Stolen Generations? Do you know Indigenous people who might be prepared to share their stories or those of their relatives? Other ways would include:
 - reading extracts from submissions to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Children from their Families, or displaying them at different points along the track.
 - Listening to songs that tell the story. The Kimberley Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation has compiled a CD of such songs. It can be ordered from <http://www.kimberleystolengeneration.com.au/cds/1.html>

- How will participants be able to express their sorrow at the suffering inflicted on the Stolen Generations, their families and communities? Some ways might include:
 - An opportunity for participants to walk the track in silence.
 - Read an extract from Prime Minister Rudd's apology on behalf of the Federal Parliament, inviting participants to join the refrain "we say sorry".
 - Invite participants to sign a sorry statement on behalf of the group. This could involve affirming an existing apology by the group.
 - Light candles for the children and place them along the track.
 - An opportunity to offer penitential prayers.
- In what way will participants be invited to make a commitment to act towards the implementation of the *Bringing Them Home* recommendations? Some options include:
 - Provide pens and paper for participants to write an action pledge and place it in a coolamon.
 - Distribute action sheets with suggestions for actions that the participants might consider taking up.
 - If you are using the 'recommendations set' of feet, write the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report on the feet and invite participants to place a candle near a recommendation on which they are committed to acting.
 - A group leader could announce a collective action commitment and invite participants to become involved in its implementation.
- How will your group call on God for help to build right relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people? Some ways would include:
 - Prayers of intercession.
 - A prayer recited by the participants together.
 - A concluding prayer by a group leader.
- Do you have a wet weather contingency plan? Perhaps it is feasible to provide umbrellas and proceed with your event in the rain, or it might be more prudent to reschedule the event. In either case, how will people know what will happen if it is raining at the scheduled time of your event?

GATHERING THE PEOPLE

- Identify your target audience. How will you communicate with them about the event? Consider notices in:
 - Parish bulletins
 - School newsletters
 - Local newspapers
 - Community radio programs
 - Christian media
 - Social justice websites such as www.faithdoingjustice.com.au
 - Newsletters of local service groups
- Find out the deadlines for submissions for each of these means of communication, the form in which information should be submitted, and who to send it to.
- Don't forget the importance of personal invitations! Are there any special guests who need to be approached in a more formal manner? Find out about the protocols involved if for example you wish to invite the Lord Mayor.

SHARING THE WORK

Identify every task involved in planning and running the event and ensure that you know who will undertake each task. Some possible tasks might include:

- Seeking permission to use a site.
- Ordering the feet.
- Preparing and printing the programs.
- Preparing an event notice.
- Circulating the event notice.
- Inviting local Elders.
- Inviting specified dignitaries and office bearers.
- Planting the track.
- Organizing any materials such as candles, a coolamon, or pens that will be needed.
- Greeting and ushering participants.
- Leading / acting as MC for the event.
- Reading and / or leading the singing.
- Acquiring appropriate music.
- Organizing sound equipment.
- Preparing background material and / or action sheets.
- Photographing / videoing / making audio recordings of the event.
- Sending reports on the event to newsletters / local media.
- Writing thank you letters to all those who played a role in or helped to organize the event.
- Providing refreshments.
- Cleaning up after the event.
- Disassembling and packing the Track for next year.