Sample Questions to Guide Discussion:

What is a residential school? Revise and refine your definition as you read.

Discuss how the experiences of the characters are similar to and different from your own.

How does understanding what has happened in the past help us to know how to act in the present?

What creates unity within a family, community or society? What role did residential schools play in uniting or segregating communities? Does unity mean everyone has to be the same? How can we stand united while respecting diversity?

Sample Activities to Complement Discussion:

How do our experiences in life shape our fundamental beliefs? Think of a time when a personal experience changed your beliefs. Write what you remember about that time.

How have residential schools had an impact on the culture of indigenous people? Create a timeline of key events related to residential schools.

Think of what your ideal community looks and feels like. How can you help promote inclusion and equality in your school or community? Create a pamphlet to illustrate your ideals.

Suggested Keywords: Residential schools, cultural identity, families, Canadian history, First Nations history, prejudice, abuse, determination, perseverance, courage, social justice

I Am Not a Number
Jenny Kay Dupuis & Kathy Kacer

When eight-year-old Irene is removed from her First Nations family to live in a residential school she is confused, frightened, and terribly homesick. She tries to remember who she is and where she came from.

Fatty Legs
Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

A touching and gripping memoir of a spirited young girl who is determined to learn to read and pressures her father to allow her to attend school.

No Time to Say Goodbye
Sylvia Olsen, Rita Morris and Ann Sam

This collection of historical fiction stories focuses on five Indigenous children, at different ages, as they deal with the challenges of a residential school.

A Stranger at Home
Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Margaret can't wait to see her family after returning home from residential school but she learns she must overcome fear and rejection, and forge a new type of acceptance. (sequel to Fatty Legs)