

Remembrance Day

Each year, on November 11, Canadians of all ages will stop to take time to remember the sacrifices made by the men and women who fought to protect our freedom, as well as to honour those currently serving in the military. While many of us recognize the significance of this day, many of us don't know exactly how Remembrance Day came to be. You also might be wondering how you can instill a sense of gratitude and appreciation for Canada's veterans and servicepersons in your children.

Remembrance Day is officially observed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month each year. This date commemorates the day, date and time that the Armistice brought an end to the fighting of the First World War, which officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. King George V of Britain officially dedicated the day as Armistice Day in 1919. In Canada, the name was changed to Remembrance Day in 1931. Remembrance Day is a public holiday in Canada, and in Manitoba, most businesses are required to be closed between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to allow citizens to pay their respects.

Often, we think of the poppy when we think of Remembrance Day. As early as the 19th century, people noticed bright red poppies growing over the graves of soldiers who had died. Then, during the First World War, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae wrote the poem, "In Flanders Fields," which many of us are familiar with. A woman from France began to sell handmade poppies to raise money for children affected by the war, and the poppy became an official symbol of remembrance in Canada in 1921. Many Canadians now wear poppies each November to show honour and respect for veterans and for those who have lost their lives in combat. You might want to try making poppies with your children, or create artwork that incorporates poppies. Some ideas are:

Coffee filter poppies – Coffee filters have the same airy look as poppies, and you likely have some in your house already. Your children can paint them using tempura paints. Use buttons to make the centres of the flowers, but be mindful to supervise young children with any small objects.

Egg carton poppies – The part of the egg carton that holds the egg has a natural flower shape to it already. After cutting it out with safety scissors, help your child to paint it red with a black centre. Pipe cleaners make perfect stems.

Children might also be interested in learning about the meanings of different military medals. You might also consider building a model ship or plane together, or visit a local monument or cenotaph. Many Canadians who lived through the World Wars will also recall rationing of foods in Canada. To help with the war effort, thriftiness became a way of life, and many recipes were altered or reinvented. Your family could [look up some of](#)

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[these recipes on Wartime Canada](#) and try them out at home, to get a taste of what Canadians experienced on the home front at wartime.

Older children and teens might be interested in hearing the stories of family members or friends who fought for Canada. One idea you can suggest is that your teen takes the time to sit down and talk with a veteran you know about his or her experience. Perhaps your teen might even create a scrapbook or blog post with your friend or family member's permission. If you don't have any veterans in your circle, you might suggest your teen spends some time with someone who has lived through wartime to hear how it impacted Canadians on home soil. Or, you can encourage your teen to check out this link from [Veterans Affairs](#), which offers information about some of the minority groups that have served for Canada, as well as the stories of women in wartime, both in combat and on the home front.

If your children are involved in Scouting, Cadets, or other service organizations, it's likely they will already be participating in Remembrance Day ceremonies in your communities. If not, attending Remembrance Day services is one of the easiest ways that you can help your child develop an appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans. You can find services in your area by using a search engine, checking with the local Legion, or in your local newspaper.

Remembrance Day offers all Manitobans an opportunity to honour the men and women who have served, and are currently serving our country. If you and your family are interested in learning more about the history and symbolism of Remembrance Day, check out the links below.

[Veterans Affairs: Indigenous Veterans](#) – Did you know that Veterans Affairs estimates that over 12,000 Indigenous Canadians served in the First and Second World Wars, and the Korean War? Your family can learn more about the sacrifices made by Aboriginal veterans by clicking this link.

[Veterans Affairs: Resources for You](#) – These resources from Veterans Affairs are directed at students and youth, but they might offer some inspiration as you choose how to commemorate Remembrance Day with your kids.

[The Canadian War Museum: Remembrance Day](#) – The Canadian War Museum in Ottawa commemorates the service and sacrifice of Canadians who have fought for our country.

[The Legion: Remembrance Day](#) – The Legion is dedicated to Honouring Canada's military heritage, and maintains a wealth of resources for Canadians of all ages on their website.