Hi!
My name is Louis!
In a few days, I have to get my vaccination...

Yucky! I do not like getting needles at all. I hate, hate, hate them! It just sucks!

I'm afraid of needles.

My older cousin said when they got their vaccination, it hurt a lot! I don’t want to get it!
I just want to play hockey or baseball with my friends, go to fiddle dances, and spend time with my cousins.
Like always, Mom and Kookum knew exactly what to say to help me feel calm. Kookum told me that I am brave and facing our fears makes us stronger. Mom talked about how the vaccine will keep me and my community safe.

This makes me feel like a superhero because facing your fears to help others is exactly what heroes do! When our community is safe, it means we get to have fun together!
If everyone faces their fears like me, we can all be together safely.

I want everyone to know that if they get their vaccinations...

they’ll be a hero like me!
Before the big day, Mom and Kookum talk about what will happen when I protect my community.

They tell me what getting a vaccine is like, how it feels, and what I can do to make sure everything goes well.
Mom, Kookum, Mooshum, you are my special people!

They ask me if there is a special person I would like to be there with me. This makes me laugh. What a silly question!
Mom and Kookum really helped me feel better but I am still a bit nervous. Mom and Kookum came up with a super cool idea.

They told me we were going to make a mini me - out of paper!

How is that gonna make it better to get a needle?
So, my mom showed me a piece of thicker paper that was cut out like a person. She explained that we would make a paper **ME** by drawing and colouring it to make it look exactly like me. **What a great idea!**
Mom told me that I could take mini Louis with me to get my needle. She said she would ask the doctor if mini Louis could get his needle first to show me how easy it would be.
We had so much fun making mini Louis. I drew my eyes, nose, and mouth first. Kookum helped me draw my hair before we drew the shirt, pants, and shoes. I didn’t think he looked like me that much, so Mom drew my favorite shirt with the Métis infinity, a sash, and moccasins that Kookum gave me on my birthday.
That’s when Kookum told us about a great Métis leader, Gabriel Dumont. He named his rifle ‘le petit,’ which means ‘little one.’ Hmm... Little one, Little Louis. Aha! Little Louis was the perfect name.

Kookum always knew the right story!

After making Little Louis, I got all ready for bed and put Little Louis on my pillow beside me.
What must’ve been the biggest fish in the world started pulling on my line. I dug in my feet, looked at Little Louis, and reeled! What’s this? I am not reeling in a fish at all! It is a giant needle?! Before I knew it, I was dreaming of fishing with Little Louis on the shores of the Qu’Appelle River. It was our job to catch fish for my family’s dinner. It was sunset and I could feel the warm sun on my face and then… Bam!!!
It turned into a fish! Little Louis and I reeled in our catch and kept our family fed.

This might have scared some other kids, but not Little Louis and me! We took some deep breaths, faced the needle calmly and... Poof!
When I woke up in the morning, I told Mom and Kookum about the dream. They told me that facing the needle was like facing my fears and that facing our fears makes them less scary.
They said the needle turned back into a fish because, even though the vaccine may seem scary, it actually helps our communities - just like fish from the Qu’Appelle River! They said that the dream meant I was brave and would do what I needed to for my family.

It was nice to hear them say this, but Little Louis and I already know how brave we are. We were in the dream after all!
The day has finally come. It was time to start getting ready. Before leaving home, I grabbed my favourite distraction, my Mooshum!

When Mooshum and I got to the doctor’s office, I tried to think about what I had been taught: to be polite and listen to my Elders.
I looked over at Mooshum and he told me to stay calm and be brave. When I looked at Little Louis, he was as calm as I had ever seen him!

Stay calm and be brave, my boy!
Right then, I knew I had nothing to worry about! While waiting, Mom and I filled out a booklet that tells the doctor how they can help me be brave.

As we walked into the office, Mooshum held one of my hands and Little Louis held the other. The office was just like Mom had described. The room had a chair, a small table, some medical stuff, and a kind nurse.
I thought that those doctors and nurses are heroes too, just like me! As the nurse looked over my booklet, Kookum offered to help me sit up straight. She said that if I sat on her lap, she could give me a big hug! Wow, that does sound nice.
I know I am ready for the needle. I want to be brave so badly but my heart is pounding like the spoons and my stomach is dancing to the beat. All of a sudden, the kind doctor, with smiling eyes, leans forward and asks me for something. Of course! Little Louis is supposed to get his needle first!
So I hand Little Louis to the doctor, she holds his arm, and puts the needle in. Next, she pulls the needle out, puts a cotton ball where it used to be, and gives Little Louis a fun band-aid.

Just like that, Little Louis is safe and he did not even flinch! If he can do it, I know I can too! All of a sudden, the rhythm pounding in my heart didn’t make me nervous, it reminded me of my Mooshum playing the spoons!
It is time to be brave and trust Kookum and Mom. Together, we say a prayer because the vaccine is here to help and that is worth praying over! After the prayer, I remain calm, stay as still as possible, and hum while Kookum sings a beautiful song that reminds me of home.
Before I know what has happened, it is already over! I guess it stung a little, but was that really what everyone was fussing about? That needle was as harmless as the one in my dream! Mom asks me how I am feeling. Hmm, how am I feeling?

I feel great! I helped protect myself, you, and everyone else in our community. I feel brave. I AM brave!
Just like that, I am safe. I protected myself and my community. Now I really can’t wait for everyone else to get vaccinated so we can play together like we used to! I close my eyes and can hear my cousins laughing and smell burgers on the BBQ!
Until everyone else shows how brave they are, I am just thankful to have a Mom, Kookum, and Mooshum that make me feel strong and safe. As we all walk out of the clinic, Kookum surprises me with some freshly picked berries and her specialty bannock made with an extra dash of love! How lucky can one kid get?!
Little Louis and Little Rhea emerged from a partnership involving members of Star Blanket Cree Nation, Morning Star Lodge (MSL), and MSL’s partners.

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Patrick Sullivan,
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Head to www.indigenoushealthlab.com/littlepeople to download more paper doll templates and other resources.

Have fun and get creative!

The paper doll can accompany your child as a support when they get vaccinated.

If they are becoming anxious you can remind them about the story of Louis getting vaccinated and how he overcame his fears. Feel free to take pictures and save them as a keepsake to document when your child was being extremely brave, just like Louis!
Template that can be copied and cut out to create your child's own personalized paper doll.
Little Louis
A Culturally Relevant Vaccination Story

MORNING STAR LODGE
AN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH RESEARCH LAB

Les Filles de Madeleine
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