

Human Rights Stories

The story of human rights activist Johan Teterissa is provided in this pack.

This story has been chosen because it is about a group of people who come together to peacefully voice their opinions. It links to the theme of solidarity that underpins Friendship Week. It is also hoped that pupils will relate to Johan because he is a primary school teacher.

The main human rights outlined in this story are:

- The right not to be put in prison without good reason
- The right to our beliefs
- The right to have ideas and say what we think
- The right not to be hurt or tortured
- The right to meet other people and assemble in a peaceful way
- The right to health care if we get ill

When discussing human rights issues, it is important to recognise and to communicate to learners that all human rights are equally important, and that they cannot be separated – like friends, they work best together.

The story page and information sheet on 'Prisoners of Conscience' can be projected onto the class wall, used as teachers' notes, or distributed as a handout for your learners where appropriate. Alternatively, the information could be read as a story to younger learners, adapting the language and discussion questions where necessary.

If you would like more human rights stories to use with your learners, and a PowerPoint presentation of human rights themed photographs, email friendshipweek@amnesty.ie

Empowering Children!

Pupils will naturally want to express their feelings about the information and stories covered. Give them an opportunity to identify what they can do locally and globally. Selling or buying the Friendship bracelets is an ideal way for them to do this, as the purchase price of €2 will directly help Amnesty International continue its vital work. We buy the bracelets from the Guatemalan Street Children's Project these purchases have helped the agency provide food, shelter and medical services in Guatemala and other cities in Central America for some of the world's 100,000,000 street children.

Tip!

Sensitive issues often arise when discussing human rights issues. Make a list of questions you might get from learners and consider how to answer these.

Taking Action

When children (and adults) hear about human rights violations, a natural reaction is for them to be worried, frustrated and angry, and to want to do something to help the people they learn about. It is important for children to realise that they can make a difference. Reassure your pupils that they can do something to defend human rights, and that doing something for even one person helps. By supporting Amnesty International you are helping us to continue to defend human rights around the world. By writing messages of solidarity to Prisoners of Conscience like Johan Teterissa, you are shining a light on his case and giving hope to people around the world who experience human rights violations.

You could consider organising a letter-writing lesson to contribute to an Amnesty International campaign that is appropriate and interesting for your learners. You could also consider discussing a local issue in your area that the children may be aware of. Information about our latest letter writing campaigns are available at www.amnesty.ie

Feedback

We would love to hear how you get on with your Friendship Week celebrations. Please do take photos of your activities and send them and your Friendship Week stories to friendshipweek@amnesty.ie

Friendship Week Activity Pack

Welcome to Friendship Week!

This activity pack outlines a range of ideas you can use to incorporate the theme of friendship into one lesson plan, a series of activities, or a week-long whole school project for all classes. The activities can be carried out as described, or can be adapted, depending on the needs of your own learners.

The activities are devised to encourage children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class to have a positive impact on people in their immediate environment (local friends) and in the wider world (global friends).



Tip!

We have friends everywhere! Think of all the people you meet at school, at home, in your local community and abroad and include them in Friendship Week.

What Does it Mean to be a Good Friend?

Use circle time to discuss the topic of friendship. Explore what being a good friend means, what a good friend says and does, and how we can all be good friends. Children could complete the sentence, 'I am a good friend when I...'. Ask pupils to think about who their friends are in class, at home and in other places. Invite them to talk about a time when someone was a good friend to them, and a time when they were a good friend to someone else.

Circle of Friends

Brainstorm with the class the things that make good friends and write a list of these qualities. Ask each child to write their name on a piece of paper and to put it into a box or bag. Invite each child to take a name from the bag and to hold hands/stand beside the person whose name they chose. The class will form a circle with everyone holding hands with two people. Give children time to find a word / words from the class list to describe the person next to them. Then ask children to complete the friendship circle by taking turns to say something good about the person next to them.

Friendship Songs and Poems

Write poems and songs about what friendship means. The poems could be acrostic – ask children to write their name or the name of a friend vertically on a page. Then think of a (nice) word or phrase beginning with each letter that describes that person.

E.g. Cath:
Clever and kind;
Always smiling;
Tells good stories with;
Happy endings!

Poems can be read aloud, displayed and read again to children on special occasions. Some examples of poems and songs about friendship can be found at www.bit.ly/amnestyfriendshipweek

Try some of these activities in your class during Friendship Week

Friendship Hands

Ask each pupil to draw the outline of their own hand, cut it out and write their name on it. Pass the hands around the class and ask pupils to write on each hand something they like about that person, or something that person has done to be a good friend. This activity could be extended to include friends outside the class – make a hand for them and present it to them.

Cards for Friends

Invite children to draw pictures or bring in photographs of their friends from outside the class and school and to talk about them at circle time. Organise a card making session where the students can make cards for a friend, neighbour, or someone in another country. Find and mark the countries on a world map (or counties on a map of Ireland).

We Work Together, We Play Together

Ask children to think about all the ways that they interact with other people in the school, through work and play in class time, yard time and at whole school events such as assembly. Explain that by working together and playing together we can make the best of all our different talents and skills. Invite children to design pictures to show this. Present this artwork in the classroom or school hall in a display entitled 'We work together, we play together'.

Friendship Chain

Ask pupils to draw and cut out paper links to make a chain. Invite them to decorate the links with symbols of friendship, friends' names and traits that are characteristic of friendship. Connect all the links in the chain and display them around the classroom, explaining that we are all connected in friendship.



Pay it Forward

Discuss how doing something nice for someone can make you feel good as well as benefiting another person. Choose a symbol of friendship – e.g. a badge, a toy, a piece of coloured card. Explain that whoever is in possession of the symbol must do a good deed for another member of the class. Make a list of all the children's names and track the good deeds completed by whom and for whom, making sure everyone gets a chance to both complete and receive a good deed, so that the symbol is passed around the whole class.

Friendship Bingo

Encourage pupils to get to know one another better. Use the handout provided or create your own. Taking a pencil and handout with them, invite the children to walk slowly around the room and find a different child to answer each of the questions in the Friendship Bingo handout. Instruct them to return to their seat and shout out 'bingo' when they have completed the worksheet.

Try some of these whole school activities

Friendship Suggestion Box

Put a 'Friendship Suggestion Box' in each class. Invite pupils to write down something nice that we can all do for our friends and to post their suggestions in the box. Ask each person to choose one of the suggested activities and to do it over the course of the week e.g. invite someone to join in a game in the yard, share colouring pencils with someone.

Friendship Assembly

Ask each class to prepare a presentation with a friendship theme for school assembly, or for a special school show. Pupils could read out poems they have written or learned, perform songs or dances or act out a drama on the theme of friendship.

Friendship Area

Designate a space or bench in the schoolyard called the 'Friendship Bench/Friendship Area'. Encourage children who are feeling left out at playtime to sit on the bench or join other children in the area. Arrange for children from older classes to organise games and include children from the Friendship Bench/Friendship Area in these games.

Friendship Café

Invite children from different classes to come together during the school day for snacks and games in a designated area called 'The Friendship Café'. This will provide them with a chance to make new friends in the school. Organise a rota so that every child gets a chance to participate at some stage during the week. Alternatively, arrange for pupils to sit beside someone new in their own class at lunchtime.

Friends in the Community

Involve the wider community by sharing with them the week's schedule of events and inviting them to take part in activities. Consider inviting parents or grandparents into the school for a coffee morning or lunch with staff and pupils. Encourage children to be friendly to people in their community e.g. by smiling or saying hello to people in the local shops, the postman etc. Invite people from the community to come to the school to talk about their jobs or hobbies e.g. people from a local active retirement association.

Friendship Awards

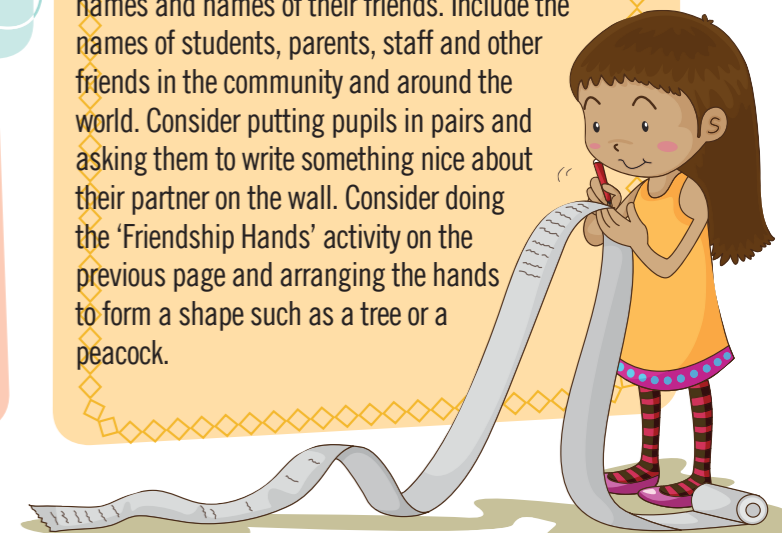
Amnesty International Ireland will provide your school with a Friendship Week Certificate. Give a copy of the certificate to children for participating in Friendship Week. Consider awarding someone in the local community for being a good friend to the school e.g. a sports coach or someone who volunteers to help pupils with reading.

The Language of Friends

Identify all the different languages spoken by people in the school community. Write a list of basic phrases in each of these languages and display them around the school, along with the flags and names of the countries in which the languages are spoken. Encourage students and staff to use greetings in different languages to demonstrate their interest and respect for different languages and cultures.

Friendship Wall

Cover a wall in the school hall with large sheets of paper to form a 'Friendship Wall'. Invite classes to take turns to decorate the Friendship Wall with their own names and names of their friends. Include the names of students, parents, staff and other friends in the community and around the world. Consider putting pupils in pairs and asking them to write something nice about their partner on the wall. Consider doing the 'Friendship Hands' activity on the previous page and arranging the hands to form a shape such as a tree or a peacock.



Curriculum Links

The themes of friendship and solidarity and the active learning methodologies outlined in this pack can be directly linked to the Primary School Curriculum, particularly in these subjects: English, SPHE, Geography, and Arts Education.