



PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

TWENTY ASSEMBLIES FOR
PRIMARY SCHOOLS



RIGHTS
RESPECTING
SCHOOLS

unicef 

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Cover: Children at Swinton Primary School in Glasgow, Scotland
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INTRODUCTION

This set of twenty assemblies is designed to help you link key children's rights concepts with dates of celebration or remembrance, although there are several that can be done at any time of year.

It might be useful to project or display an image, but these assemblies have been designed to be resource-light – they rely in a large part on the participation of children to bring them to life.

Many of the situations depicted here are real-world situations, encountered in the course of UNICEF's global work. We advise that you read through each assembly before presenting to children.

ABOUT THE RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD

UNICEF works with schools in Ireland to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. Our Rights Respecting Schools Award embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.

Find at more at unicef.ie/rrsa

ABOUT UNICEF

UNICEF is here for every child. We help more children than any other organisation. We keep them safe when war or disaster strike. We provide life-saving food, clean water and vaccinations. We protect them from violence

and exploitation. We give them a safe place to laugh and play. We get them into school and give them the chance of a better future. All over the world, including in Ireland, we're working with our partners and supporters to make the world a safer place for every child.

Find out more at unicef.ie

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, created in 1989, recognises that children have the right to be treated with dignity and fairness, to be protected, to develop to their full potential and to have their views respected, regardless of who they are, or where they are from.

The UNCRC has been officially adopted by 194 countries – every country in the world except the United States – which means they are all committed to working to uphold the rights of the child, no matter what the situation is in their country.

The UNCRC is the basis of all of UNICEF's work.

The images provided in this resource must only be used in the context of the corresponding assembly, and not shared externally or used for any other purpose.

1. EVERYONE'S A HERO

Ego, the boy on the left, used to bully Sripun, the girl on the right. Since they went to an anti-bullying programme, they are now best friends. (Indonesia)
©Unicef/Modola



ANY TIME

Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect.

Key words

- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Rights
- Respect
- Learning
- Harmony
- Justice

Resources

- You will need, if possible, to display or project the image of Ego and Sripun shown above: [unicef.uk/antibullying](https://www.unicef.uk/antibullying)

Pupil participation

This assembly features a set of nine multiple-choice questions. Pupils could come with ready-made voting boards with the letters A, B, C written on them, which they hold up in response to each question. It may be best not to ask all nine questions at once, instead discussing each answer immediately after its corresponding question. If you write each question and its three possible 'answers' on flipchart paper in advance of the assembly, students won't have to rely on listening skills and memory.

Assembly Content

First of all, I want you all to give yourselves a round of applause. I've asked you to do that because I want us to congratulate all the heroes we have in this school. We have many children who are heroes at this school.

[Refer to the actions of a child or group of children that would make them 'heroes' or 'heroines'.]

The heroes I want to talk about today are all of you: you are heroes for the way we are tackling bullying in this school. Now I am sure we all know children who have been bullied, even if not at this school. Is that right?

What is bullying? Can someone describe it to me?

[You will probably get a whole range of answers to respond to.]

Okay. What is our policy on bullying at this school? How do we respond to bullying?
[Take responses.]

In this assembly I want to remind us all what we should do if anyone tries to bully us, whether it's in school, or outside school. To do this, we are going to have a quiz.

I am going to ask you nine questions and for each one there are three choices: A, B or C. You need to write down on your paper the number of the question and then the letter of the answer you think is right. Then we will talk about your answers.

Don't worry, this is not a test. It's just another way of talking about what we are doing to stamp out bullying in this school. Are you ready? [Suggested correct answers are underlined]

The hero quiz

Questions derived from Kidscape's What is bullying, www.kidscape.org.uk

Question 1: You are walking to school and a gang of bullies demand money or your trainers. What should you do?

- a. Fight them.
- b. Shout and try to run away.
- c. Give them what they want, and tell your teacher and parents.

Question 2: You are on the school playground and someone accidentally trips you up. What should you do?

- a. Hit the person hard.
- b. Give them a chance to apologise.
- c. Shout at them and tell the teacher they deliberately hurt you.

Question 3: You are in the school toilet when an older student punches you. You ask them to stop and that you will tell a teacher. The older student tells you not to do anything or "You'll get worse." What should you do?

- a. Wait until the bully leaves and then tell a teacher.
- b. Get into a fight with them.
- c. Accept what happened and don't tell.

Question 4: A gang of bullies corner you and start hitting you. What do you do?

- a. Do nothing. Just take it.
- b. Shout for attention and run away.
- c. Fight back.

Question 5: Someone in your class is always making rude comments about you and says them loud enough for you and others to hear. It really upsets you. What do you do?

- a. Get angry and punch the bully.
- b. Make nasty remarks back.

- c. Try not to react to the comments and tell the teacher.

Question 6: A group of your former “best” friends start to leave you out of their games. This hurts your feelings and makes you very upset. What should you do?

- a. Try to find a new group of friends.
- b. Telephone a member of the group to ask them why they are doing this. Tell your parents.
- c. Do both A and B.

Question 7: Your friend’s dad recently died and some kids are making hurtful comments to your friend. How do you act?

- a. Come to your friend’s defence and tell them to stop it.
- b. Leave your friend to sort out their own problems.
- c. Ignore it. It will stop eventually.

Question 8: You are getting your food in the lunch room and someone yells out a rude comment at you. It is the first time this has happened. How should you respond?

- a. Yell back.
- b. Ignore it for now but if it happens again tell a teacher.
- c. Knock their lunch tray over.

Question 9: You see someone being bullied. What should you do?

- a. Get help or try to stop the bully yourself – but only if you won’t get hurt.
- b. Ignore it, walk by and be thankful it isn’t you.

- c. Laugh at the bully’s victims in the hope that the bully won’t pick on you next time.

[When you have discussed all the answers and ensured that you have reinforced the key actions outlined in the school’s anti-bullying policy, you could point to the photograph of Ego and Sripun, and read the caption out to the pupils.]

Why are we looking at this picture today?

The way to stop bullying is to stand up to it, tell someone and not let it pass unchallenged. The bully is not brave. The person who does not accept bullying is.

2. THE DISPLACEMENT CYCLE

A woman and her child who have been forced to move because of drought walk to a medical unit in their settlement near the town of Ainabo, Somalia. ©Unicef/Holt



ANY TIME

Article 4

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

Article 6

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 22

If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

Keywords

- Compassion
- Support
- Evolution
- Helping
- Rights
- Global

Resources

- If possible, display or project the image shown above: [unicef.uk/drought_somalia](https://www.unicef.uk/drought_somalia)

Pupil Participation

- Volunteers from the audience to stand up when asked.

Assembly Content

Good morning everyone!

Today we are going to think about all the different ways people are forcibly displaced around the world. Did you know that one child is forced to leave their home every six seconds? Our assembly is X minutes today. That means that, before the end of our

assembly, X children in the world will have had to leave their homes because of climate problems, conflict or natural hazards.

Can I have X volunteers to stand up please?

[You can just ask a number of children in the front row, or select that number of children in another way].

Why do you think all these children had to leave their homes?

[Students will likely respond with 'war', drought' or 'not enough money'.]

What do you think would be the hardest thing about having to leave your home, school and even your community?

[Ask students standing up to try giving some answers, and then they can sit down.]

We are used to thinking about people leaving their homes because of war, or because of drought. But we don't often realise that usually people leave home because of a combination of different things.

For example, if a drought affects a certain place, then people won't be able to water their crops, so the crops might die. Then there won't be any food to eat. If there's no food, what do you think people will do?

[Wait for some suggestions.]

They will probably go to the nearest place with water. But when everyone leaves a place, including all the teachers and doctors, all the schools and hospitals close down

too. And the town with water that everyone moves to will quickly become overrun, and all the water will be used up, so people will have to keep moving.

So, you see, it isn't the drought on its own that makes people leave. The drought causes a chain reaction which means that all the things people need to survive and thrive are taken away – they don't have a choice. And this is why we call it 'forced displacement'.

Can anyone think of a place in the world today where people are being forcibly displaced as we speak?

[Wait for some suggestions.]

We're going to listen to a story about the experience of a child who is forced to leave their home, and let's see what we can learn from it.

Story

Narrator: Ubah is fifteen years old. She works in her family's small tea shop in the village of Yibayil, in Somalia's Puntland region. She isn't in school at the moment but Ubah dreams of completing her education.

Ubah: I would like to be a teacher in this village or any place I can teach small children.

Last year I was a Level One student at Yibayil's Education Centre, supported by UNICEF. The drought in Puntland forced lots of families to leave our village in search of water. With only ten students remaining, the school had to close. I am very sad the school is no longer open. I was hoping to continue learning until I completed school.

My family own a tea shop, and we are some of the only people who did not leave the area. I now look after my little sister, help with the shop and sell vegetables from our family's farm.

Narrator: Many parts of Somalia have suffered from severe droughts and flooding because of climate change. It is particularly bad in Somaliland and Puntland. Around 213,000 people have been affected by the drought, including nearly 43,000 school-age children.

Displacement and fewer children going to school have meant that a third of schools in drought-affected areas have closed.

The drought has been especially devastating for those who depend on farming for their living. They face terrible water shortages and sky-rocketing water prices. Many farmers have had to move to find water, food and grazing pasture for their animals. For some families, this means taking children out of school, which leads to the schools closing down because there are not enough pupils.

[Recap the story by asking some questions:]

- What was the first thing that happened to Ubah's family?
- And what other problems did this lead to?
- Do you think Ubah will be able to finish her education? How?
- If she does, what might be different in her life?
- Are there any new problems that might arise because her school closed? How could these problems be resolved?

Conclusion

We are very lucky in Ireland that we have quite a gentle climate, and we don't have serious droughts or cyclones. We also don't have a big

conflict in our country, and so most of us are quite safe in our homes and communities.

But did you know that all humans probably came from Africa originally? One of the oldest human skeletons, 'Lucy', was found in Ethiopia – a country that is affected by serious droughts nearly every year. Ethiopia is also surrounded by countries that have had conflict for many years, like Somalia and South Sudan.

So how did we end up in Ireland if we are probably all from Africa? Does anyone have any idea?

[Answer: we migrated over the years.]

Yes – that's right – our ancestors must have migrated. Some of them might have migrated for work and opportunities, but I bet quite a lot of them didn't have a choice if they wanted to survive droughts and ice ages!

These days, people often move by plane, train, bus and car, but in the old days people rode animals and carts, or they walked – sometimes for very long distances.

Today, migration patterns continue. Every year hundreds of thousands of people move to other countries just to survive, and it is important to know that this is the way it has always been – since long before there were national borders, passports and visas. It is our responsibility to care for, welcome and support the people who come to our communities as refugees, just as others did for our ancestors when they first moved.

This assembly is an accompaniment to our teaching resource Forced to Flee.

3. MIGRATION AND HOW IT BENEFITS SOCIETY



A family from Afghanistan choosing clothes together at Divljana refugee camp in Serbia.
©Unicef/Vas



ANY TIME

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 4

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights

Article 6

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Keywords

- Recognition
- Empowerment
- Hope
- New beginnings

Resources

- Display an image of Steve Jobs.
- You will also need to display seven images of achievements or inventions of migrants or refugees, along with some other images of items that were not created by migrants or refugees. You could include: **a book of psychoanalysis** (the movement was founded by Sigmund Freud, from Austria); a **Fugees album cover** (Wyclef Jean and Pras Michel are Haitian) or **Rita Ora's album or singles cover art** (she was born in Yugoslavia); an **iPhone** (Apple was founded by Steve Jobs, born in Syria); an **Olympic gold medal** for the UK (Mo Farah is from Somalia); **The Muppets** (started by Lew Grade, from Ukraine); the **Mini** (designed by Alex Issigonis, from Turkey); a **Marks and Spencer's shopfront** (co-founder Michael Marks was from Poland). You will then

need to mix in some non-migrant inventions or achievements, for example: a **bicycle**, a **fridge**, a **light bulb** or a **pair of jeans**.

Assembly Content

Today, I'd like us to think about all the people who have moved to a different country. Is anyone here in assembly from another country, or has anyone got parents, aunts or uncles who moved from a different country?

[Some children raise their hands.]

Every day there are stories in the newspapers about all the things happening around the world that cause people to move away from their country, but we don't often take the time to talk about all the wonderful things that those people bring to the new country they settle in.

I'd like to share a story with you about a refugee. He left his home, the city of Homs in Syria, to go to Beirut in Lebanon to study law. He was passionate about politics, and often attended protests and demonstrations to express his beliefs. But the protests against the then-president became violent, and he had to flee for his life.

He went to the US, where he had a relative, and continued his studies there. He settled in well, and he fell in love with an American woman. They had a baby together, but because the woman's parents wouldn't allow them to get married, the baby was put up for adoption and was taken in by a couple from the US.

The baby was well loved and cared for, and his father taught him a lot about his passion – mechanics. The boy grew up learning a lot about machines, and eventually went into business, becoming one of the world's most famous people.

Does anyone know who this boy grew up to be, the child of a refugee?

Does anyone have an Ipad, a Mac or any other Apple product at home?

[Wait for responses.]

The boy was Steve Jobs, who founded the company Apple, which invented all these things. None of that would have been possible if his father had not fled Lebanon to come to the US.

Conclusion

Let's look at some of the wonderful things that we have today, thanks to people who had to flee their homes and countries, but who brought amazing skills, creativity and inspiration to their new homes. Refugees have made huge accomplishments in every field – music, science, philosophy, sports and nearly every other subject!

[Project the pictures of famous migrants and their achievements.]

Now, we're going to have a competition to see who can guess which of these things has come about because a refugee found a place to settle safely and use their amazing skills.

Those on the left side of the assembly hall
[demonstrate with your arm] – you are
team A.

Those on the right [demonstrate]
– you are Team B.

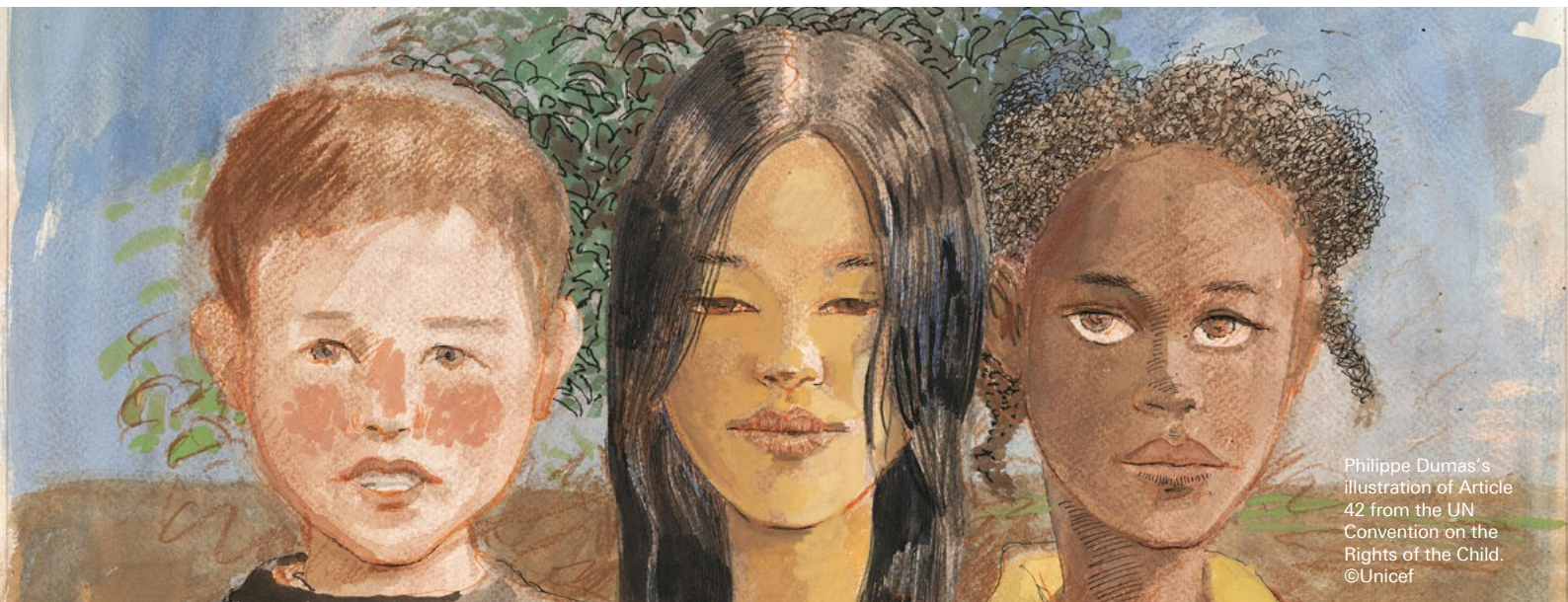
There are seven things up here that were
achieved by a refugee. Raise your hand
if you think you have an answer, and the
team with the most correct answers at the
end of two minutes, wins!

[Take guesses and count correct answers
per team]

Well done! Looks like Team (A or B) are
our winners!

As we can all see, there's a huge range of
achievements that refugees have made and
will carry on making in their new homes. It is
important to realise and celebrate all of those
things – perhaps more important than thinking
about the difficulties they left behind. This
way, we can help them to achieve even more.

4. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY



15 JANUARY

Article 1

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 2

The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to everyone without exception. Governments should take all measures to ensure that children are protected against all forms of discrimination.

Keywords

- Choice
- Equality
- Freedom
- Tolerance
- Harmony
- Justice
- Respect
- Rights

Resources

- Some chairs
- You will need, if possible, to display or project a photograph of Martin Luther King (unicef.uk/martin_luther_king) and Philippe Dumas's illustration of Article 42 shown above (unicef.uk/article42).

Pupil participation

One class: Decide on a way in which you can divide a class so they fall into two groups – the relative size of the groups is unimportant. For the purpose of explaining the assembly, eye colour will be used. However, you can use any distinction that will enable the class to be divided; for example, shoe or sock colour.

Assembly Content

Class [name of class], please would you all stand and come up here?

[Class rise and come to stage]

I want all of you who have blue eyes [or the distinction you have chosen] to stand on my

right. [Indicate to your right]

Now, will the rest of you, those who don't have blue eyes, stand on my left.

[Indicate to your left]

Now all those with blue eyes, please put your hands up if you think that everybody on my left should sit down.

[They vote.]

Okay, thank you. Now everyone with blue eyes can sit down.

[Look around the hall and take in reactions of all the pupils.]

What have I just done?

[Take responses.]

Was that fair?

[Take responses.]

Thank you Class [name of class], please can you all return to your seats [Class leave the stage.]

What I did was very unfair. Only those with blue eyes got to vote and they decided what happened to everybody who did not have blue eyes. Then I only allowed the children with blue eyes to sit down. Let me tell you why I did this.

The story of Martin Luther King, Jr.

If we were in the United States of America, we

wouldn't be at school today. This is because January 15 is a national holiday in the United States. Today is Martin Luther King Day.

[Either hold up photograph of Martin Luther King, Jr., at this point, or point to the photograph on display]

Up until the 1960s, black people in some areas of the United States could not vote in elections. There were separate sections for them on public transport, parks, restaurants and even separate toilets. In some states, black children were denied an education or had to go to separate schools from their white friends. These schools were often poorly funded and equipped.

People of colour in America were usually in badly paid work and lived in the poorest areas. Some black American adults and children were killed, beaten up, threatened and wrongfully put in prison.

Martin Luther King was a Christian who was determined to make sure that all Americans had the same rights regardless of their race. When Rosa Parks, a black woman, was arrested after refusing to give up her seat on a bus for a white man in the city where he preached, King called on black people to protest by not travelling on buses in the city.

When the protest ended with a ban on separate seating for people of different skin colours, King organised other non-violent demonstrations against the unfair treatment of black Americans. When the authorities used force to end the protests, King gained even more support. In 1963, he led a huge march on Washington, D.C., the US capital. Here, in

front of a crowd of 250,000 people, King made his famous speech “I have a dream” speech. Here is a short extract:

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.”

In 1964 King received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end racial prejudice in the United States. The US Government brought in laws to ensure equal rights for all US citizens and to give everybody the chance to vote. Tragically, just a few years later, in 1968, Martin was murdered. Over 300,000 people went to his funeral. Martin Luther King, and others like him, helped to inspire the start of a cultural shift in attitudes towards race and equality.

Why did Martin Luther King want to make changes in the United States?

[Look for answers around the themes of rights, justice, equality and fairness.]

Why do you think I only allowed the children with blue eyes to vote and to sit down?

[Hopefully children will respond that it was to show how unfair life can be when not everyone has their rights respected.]

What should I have done so that I was not being unfair to one group of children?

[Hopefully children will answer that everyone should have been allowed to vote and to sit down.]

Do we need to act like Martin Luther King in this school – and campaign for equality?

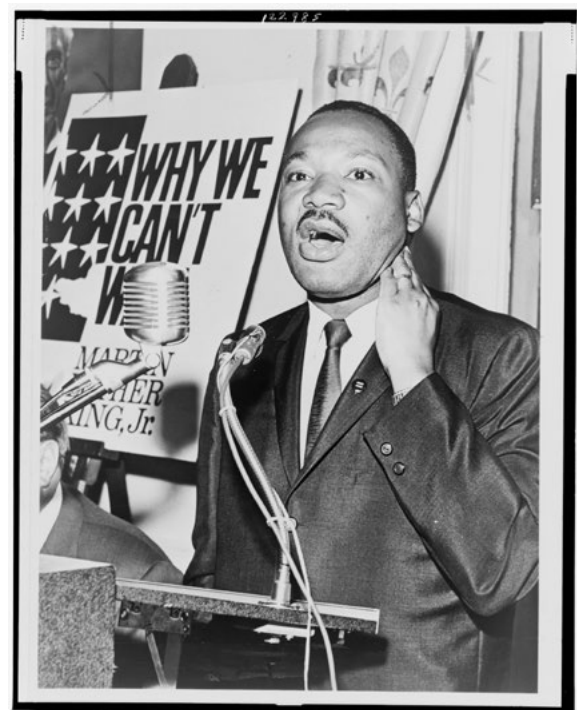
[Answers should be about the school’s rights and responsibility ethos.]

Conclusion

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Philippe Dumas’s illustration of Article 42). Then ask:

Why are we looking at this picture?

[From the answers draw out that all people should be treated equally. Everyone has the same rights.]



Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–68)
Credit: ©Dick DeMarsico

5. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY



Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
©Unicef



27 JANUARY

Article 2

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Articles 19 and 32–37

The government is responsible for protecting children from violence, abuse, neglect, poor treatment and exploitation.

Keywords

- Freedom
- Harmony
- Justice
- Respect
- Peace
- Safety
- Tolerance
- Rights

Resources

- Copy of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*
- School satchels, hair curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, combs, diaries and some letters.

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19, pictured above ([unicef.uk/article19](https://www.unicef.uk/article19)) and a photograph of Anne Frank ([unicef.uk/annefrank](https://www.unicef.uk/annefrank)).

Pupil participation

A small group of children. At the point in the story when Anne Frank packs her satchel, a small group of children could come to the front, each carrying one of the things she took with her and pack them into a satchel.

Assembly Content

Please put your hand up if you have heard of Anne Frank?

[If you think none of the children will have heard of her, then omit this question.]

[Hold up a copy of *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank.]

Anne Frank's story

This book is called *The Diary of a Young Girl*. The diary was written between 1942 and 1944 by a young Jewish girl called Anne Frank in Amsterdam, capital of the Netherlands. Anne was given the diary for her 13th birthday, just before she and her family had to hide from the Nazis, who had invaded the Netherlands in 1940, during the Second World War.

Before Anne went into hiding, the Nazis had already taken away many rights from Jewish people in the Netherlands, simply because of their religion. These are some of the rules Jews had to obey:

- Jews had to sew a yellow star onto their coats and be sure it was visible at all times when they were on the streets.
- Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, on buses or trams or trains.
- Jews were not allowed to have bicycles.
- Jews could only do their shopping between the hours of 3 pm and 5 pm.
- Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am.
- Jews were forbidden to go to the cinema, theatres or other places of entertainment. They were not allowed to use swimming pools, tennis courts or any other sports field.
- Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8pm.
- Jews were forbidden to visit Christian friends in their homes.

In one of her first entries in the diary, Anne wrote, "Paper has more patience than people." This was a saying Anne had heard, and since she felt that she didn't have a close friend she thought of her diary as her best friend and called it "Kitty".

A month later in July 1942, Anne Frank's family had to pack up and go into hiding very suddenly when her 16-year-old sister, Margot, received a letter telling her she had to report to the authorities in the morning. This meant she would be taken away to a work camp.

Anne was told to pack her school satchel with a few items that she wanted to take with her.

[Enter pupils each carrying one of the articles and placing them in a satchel.]

She wrote in her diary, "Margot and I started packing our most important belongings into a satchel. The first thing I stuck in was this diary, and then curlers, handkerchiefs, school books, a comb and some old letters. Preoccupied by the thought of going into hiding, I stuck the craziest things in the satchel, but I'm not sorry. Memories mean more to me than dresses."

Anne and her family had to go into hiding, and her diary became even more important to her. It was a place where she could write down her deepest feelings about what was happening day by day, and also her thoughts and hopes for the future.

In August 1944, the Frank family were discovered in their hiding place and Anne and her family were sent to a concentration camp. Life there was full of horrors. Anne's mother died first, then her sister. Anne died of hunger

and a disease called typhus just three weeks before British and American soldiers reached the camp and set the people free. Anne was only 15 years old. In her short life, she had experienced many kinds of injustice but she never gave up hope.

In one of the last entries in her diary she wrote: "It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realise them!"

[Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19) and the photograph of Anne Frank below.]

Why are we looking at these pictures today?

Because today, January 27, is Holocaust Memorial Day. The Holocaust is the name given to the murder of over 6 million people by the Nazis during the Second World War. Of the 6 million, 1.5 million were under the age of 18 years. It is estimated that 1.2 million Jewish children were murdered, but tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsy) children and thousands of children with learning difficulties and disabilities were also killed.

Holocaust Memorial Day is a day on which we can remember all the victims, and make sure it does not happen again. It also commemorates

the victims of more recent massacres around the world.

Conclusion

1. What rights did Anne lose before she went into hiding and then when she was in hiding?
2. What do you think she meant when she said, "memories mean more to me than dresses?"
3. How do you think Anne managed to stay hopeful about the future?

You could link the response to question 3 to Anne's courage and her determination for the future. Early in 1944, Anne heard a radio broadcast by a member of the Dutch Government. He said that after the war he hoped to collect eyewitness accounts of the suffering of the Dutch people. As an example, he specifically mentioned letters and diaries. Impressed by the speech, Anne decided that when the war was over she would publish a book based on her diary and she began rewriting and editing her work.

4. Pupils could think about what they would pack if they suddenly had to go into hiding. This could be done as a list, or they could make collages using the shape of a school bag and drawing, colouring and cutting out all the things they would put in the satchel.



Anne Frank (1929–45)
©Anne Frank House
Amsterdam/Anne Frank
Fonds Basel

6. MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY



Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ©Unicef



21 FEBRUARY

Article 2

Every child has the same rights regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, politics, nationality, social class, place of birth or disability.

Article 30

Every child has the right to practice their own culture, language and religion.

Key words

- Equal
- Freedom
- Global
- Harmony
- Justice
- Respect
- Right
- Tolerance

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2, pictured above: [unicef.uk/article2](https://www.unicef.uk/article2).

Pupil participation

A child to narrate Selwa's story. A group of children who speak other languages.

This assembly is an opportunity for children who speak another language to share it with others. Ask each one to start by saying "Good morning" in the other language to the assembly. You could also ask these students one at a time to hold up a large piece of paper with "Good morning" or "Hello" written in the other language. The rest of the children could then see if they can say the word or phrase. The child who can speak the other language could then help them out with the pronunciation. The children who speak another language could finish by each saying something about themselves: first in their own language, then in English.

Assembly Content

Did you realise that all these children speak other languages? Some of them speak more than one other language. Please put up your hand if you speak more than one other language.

I know some of you have started to learn French. Is it easy?

How many of you can say something in French?

[See if there are any volunteers to say anything and possibly comment.]

That is very good. For some of children who were holding signs – French is their second, third, or even fourth language.

The reason I asked all these children to talk to us in their languages today is because today is International Mother Language Day. The language we first learn to speak from our family is called our “mother tongue”, and this is a day to celebrate people’s right to practice their own language. This is Article 30 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Put up your hand if you have visited another country where they speak another language?

When you were there were you able to understand what people were saying?

Could you do the shopping?

We are fortunate because so many people in the world speak English, but it is not so easy for those who come here and have to learn English. And there are many countries in the

world where English isn’t the first language, and people who move to those countries have to learn another language. Like Selwa had to. She is now 12 and lives in Spain. Let Selwa tell you her story.

[Child who is narrating Selwa’s story steps forward.]

Selwa’s story

Let me tell you about my family. Ten years ago, when I was just a baby, my parents emigrated from Morocco to Spain. My two brothers and my sister were born in Spain. My father is a doctor and my mother is a teacher.

Well, that’s what they did in Morocco. When my parents came to Spain, they couldn’t find jobs because their qualifications weren’t from Spanish universities. Also, the main language spoken in Morocco is Arabic, and in Spain they had to learn Spanish. My Papa worked in a hospital, but he was cleaning the floors. Papa managed to do further studies until he had qualifications that let him practice as a doctor again. Mama always says that it was a struggle but she is so glad because my Papa only ever wanted to be a doctor.

After we had been here for a few years, Papa arranged for his mother to join us. His father had already died and Nana was on her own. Now we all live together in one apartment. I don’t remember much about Morocco, so Spain is really home for me. My brothers and sister wouldn’t even think about living anywhere else – this is all they’ve ever known. I know it’s different for Mama and Papa. Papa has made lots of friends through his work and his Spanish is almost as good as mine. Mother’s friends are mostly Moroccan and

her Spanish is limited to doing the shopping and greeting neighbours. Nana only speaks Arabic. I think I've only ever heard her say "hello", "thank you", "goodbye", "how much" and "too much" in Spanish. Nana says she's too old to learn anything new.

I'm proud of coming from Morocco and of being Spanish. Does that sound strange? I like things about both cultures. I love both languages – Mama and Nana talk to me in Arabic. It upsets me when teachers tell me not to speak Arabic at school, like it's a bad language or something. I have friends who are completely Spanish and friends who are a bit of a mix like me. They treat me the same. It tends to be children that don't know me, or ignorant adults who offend me.

Sometimes they don't mean it. They say, "You're not Spanish are you, where are you from?" I want to say, "Actually I am Spanish, but I'm originally from Morocco." I think if I was white, they wouldn't say these things. I've talked to my father about racism. He tells me that sometimes patients don't want to see him because he's black. That upsets me but it's their loss because he is the best doctor in his clinic.

Thank you [child's name] for being Selwa. And thank you everyone who shared their language with us.

Conclusion

Who can tell me something they have learnt from this morning's assembly?

[Hopefully, that everyone has the right to use their mother tongue, and that we should respect other people's languages, culture, etc. Display or project a large copy of the cover picture Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2.]

Why are we looking at this picture today?

[Look for responses around respecting differences, understanding others, celebrating diversity.]

7. WORLD THINKING DAY

P.J. Lynch's illustration of Article 24 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
©Unicef



22 FEBRUARY

Article 15

All children have the right to meet with others and to join or set up associations, unless in doing so they violate the rights of others.

Article 24

Every child has the right to good quality health care.

Key words

- Helping
- Volunteering
- Vaccination
- Responsibility
- Rights

Resources

- You may want to display or project P.J. Lynch's illustration of Article 24, pictured above: [unicef.uk/article24](https://www.unicef.uk/article24).

- Scouts and Guides badges and/or uniforms
- A large piece of paper on which is written "Vision for Scouting: As a global movement, making a real contribution to creating a better world".
- Market goods such as vegetables, clothes, toys, toiletries and so on. Dolls to represent babies.
- Leaflets with the title, 'What everyone needs to know about polio and how to prevent it'.

Pupil participation

The story is a dramatisation that can be either read or acted. It needs a cast of at least 12, as it takes place at a busy market in Angola.

Characters

Isa and Carlos – Both are 12–14 years old. They are carrying some leaflets.

Woman 1 – shopping in the market with her baby on her back and plastic bowl on her head.

Woman 2 – a stall holder.

Woman 3 – a shopper, she has a baby on her back.

Women 4 and 5 – shoppers.

Man – a man in the market.

Other people – stall holders and shoppers in the market.

Costumes

Isa and Carlos should wear Guide and Scout uniforms/badges, and carry the leaflets. Woman 1 has a baby/doll tucked in the back of her brightly coloured wrap.

Woman 2 is wearing a bright coloured wrap and is sitting under a large umbrella for shade. Shoppers carry plastic bowls on their heads, or carry wicker baskets.

Boys wear loose fitting t-shirts over their trousers.

Assembly Content

Do any of you go to Guides or Scouts, or Beavers?

[Hopefully you will have at least five or six.]

Today/February 22 is World Thinking Day. It is a special day when Scouts and Guides all around the world think of each other. And there are millions of Scouts and Guides spread across more than 150 countries.

Today, we are going to watch a play about what Scouts and Guides do in Angola, southern Africa. But first I am going to ask you a question: who knows what a vaccination is?

A vaccination protects us against a

dangerous disease by giving us a very small amount of the disease, so our bodies develop the strength to beat the full disease. You will probably all have been given vaccinations against measles, polio, tuberculosis (or TB) and several others too.

The UNICEF office in Angola know that one of the best and cheapest ways of protecting children, and giving them a better chance of growing up healthy, is to vaccinate them against polio. Polio is a serious illness, which can leave affected children with physical problems for life, or even kill them.

And do you know who UNICEF Angola have helping them?

Guides and Scouts: UNICEF needed as many people as they could get to help them tell people about the vaccination campaign and how the polio vaccine will help their babies.

This is a story about Isa and Carlos, who volunteered to help spread the message about preventing polio.

Play starts

Scene: Sao Paulo Market in Luanda, capital of Angola

The stage is full of people, some sitting on the ground in front of their 'stalls', others moving around between them, looking at and buying goods.

Enter Isa and Carlos.

They look around the busy scene and whisper to each other. Isa approaches a woman who has her young daughter tied

on her back and is balancing a blue plastic bowl on her head, to be filled with goods from the market.

Isa: Hi, my name's Isa. I'm a Guide. Have you heard about polio? Do you know that this weekend all Angolan children under the age of 5 are being vaccinated for free against polio?

Woman 1: Rather puzzled, the woman looks at her. Who did you say you are?

Isa: My name's Isa. I'm a Guide and I want to tell you how to make sure your baby grows up to be healthy.

The woman takes the large bowl off her head and sits down on the ground and readjusts her daughter onto her lap. A few women gather to listen as Isa kneels beside Woman 1 and begins to explain.

Isa: Polio is a disease that can disable your child. But if she gets two drops of vaccine into her mouth this weekend and again in July and August, she'll be protected against polio for life.

Woman 1: Oh, I don't want my baby to be disabled. How much are the drops?

Isa: They are free! We're doing vaccinations all weekend at people's houses. Be sure you're at home tomorrow morning with your child, and the vaccinators will come and give your baby the drops to protect her against polio.

Woman 1: You're sure it's free? There's not much free in this world.

Isa: Absolutely free. Just stay at home tomorrow morning until the vaccinators come, alright? I promise you the vaccines are free. Here, take one of these leaflets.

Woman 1: Well, okay. I'll wait for them tomorrow. Thanks for the information.

She stands and wraps her daughter back on to her back.

Now, I have to buy some food for my family.

Isa goes back to her friend Carlos, who has been watching her talk to the woman.

Isa: See, it's easy. Usually, after we've left, the women talk amongst themselves and the word passes quickly, especially here in the market.

Carlos: Yes, I see. It's just like the training we had at Scouts. Let me talk with this lady here.

Carlos squats down beside Woman 2 who is protected from the sun by an umbrella.

Carlos: Hi, my name's Carlos. I'm a Scout. Have you heard about polio? Polio is a disease that can disable your child. But, if she gets two drops this weekend and again in July and August, she'll be protected against polio for life. And it's free.

Woman 2: She listens patiently and attentively and when he's finished she smiles and pats him on the cheek. You're a good boy. But you don't need to tell me – my child was vaccinated this morning before I came to the market. Now, go and tell the other women – maybe they don't know.

Carlos smiles, gets up and goes to join up with Isa, who is meeting some resistance from Woman 3.

Woman 3: No, no, no! No vaccines! I give my baby traditional medicine – that’s enough!

Isa, still smiling and determined not to give up.

Isa: But, Mae – he needs the vaccines to stop him from getting polio ... it will make him strong.

Again, a small crowd of women has gathered around Isa. Laughing and smiling, they join in to support Isa.

Woman 4: My baby got the drops this morning.

Woman 5: Listen to us – we’re trying to help your baby!

Man: The Girl Scout is right – the vaccines are what will work.

Carlos, who has been listening joins in. He touches the woman on the elbow. She looks at him sternly.

Carlos: Looking into the woman’s eyes. Mae. Maybe you could give your son the traditional medicine and the vaccination drops ... they don’t cost anything.

Everyone looks at Carlos. He keeps looking straight into the woman’s eyes. She continues to look at him, then after a few moments, looks around at the others who are silently waiting for her reaction.

Woman 3: Woman 3 smiles and says proudly. I’ve just decided to make sure my baby gets both the traditional medicine and the drops. Then, he’ll be even stronger!

She turns and starts to make her way through the crowd, her dignity intact.

Isa and Carlos give out their leaflets to anyone who will take them.

A pupil holds up a large piece of paper on which is written “Vision for Scouting: As a global movement, making a real contribution to creating a better world.”

Conclusion

So that’s an example of how Guides and Scouts are helping communities in Angola.

Can anyone here tell us about something Guides or Scouts have done to help our community?

[You might like to ask pupils to suggest something the school could do.]

8. WORLD BOOK DAY



Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ©Unicef



7 MARCH

Article 28

All children and young people have a right to free primary education. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level they can.

Article 15

All children have the right to meet with others and to join or set up associations, unless in doing so they violate the rights of others.

Article 24

Every child has the right to good quality health care.

Keywords

- Responsibility
- Learning
- Rights
- Freedom

- Choice
- Refugee
- Safety
- Justice
- Equality

Resources

- Photographs showing children in schools around the world.
- You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29, pictured above: [unicef.uk/article28_29](https://www.unicef.uk/article28_29).

Pupil participation

Pupils from across the age-range recommend a favourite book. This could be accompanied by a picture they have drawn – either of the cover or of an incident from the book.

Assembly Content

March 7 is World Book Day, a day when people celebrate books and reading – reading for pleasure as well as reading for information.

In Ireland we may take books for granted. We buy them in shops or borrow them from the library and download them to reading tablets. Our schools and our homes have books and I am sure we all have a favourite book.

[You could talk about your own favourite book for a couple of minutes.]

Today, some pupils are going to tell you about their favourite books.

[Children take it in turn to talk about their favourite books.]

But while we may take books for granted, there are millions of children who cannot get their hands on a book to read, for whom even a school textbook is a luxury. When we hear about the hardships suffered by children in other parts of the world, do we think about what effect this is having on their schooling? Today, I am going to tell you about children whose education has been badly affected by the conflict in their countries.

Mina's story

Mina lives in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a country where it has not been easy to get an education for nearly 20 years, mainly because of war. For 20 years, hardly any teachers have been trained and very few textbooks printed.

For the first 10 years of Mina's life, a group called the Taliban controlled Afghanistan. The Taliban believed that girls didn't need to be educated and they didn't allow women to have jobs. Only boys were allowed to go

to school. However, Mina's parents wanted her to be educated and, although it was dangerous, Mina attended a secret school in her teacher's home.

In 2002 the Taliban lost power and all children, including girls, were encouraged to return to school. The problem was how schools could open when many were in ruins and there were no textbooks, no pencils, no pens and no exercise books. As the organisation responsible for improving the lives of children worldwide, UNICEF worked to help as many children as possible get back to school.

Now Mina is able to go to school. She was the first pupil to turn up at school and collect her bag, books and pens, which had all been provided by UNICEF.

Mina says, "I am pleased to be able to go to school. Now I am studying properly, and this is a great time for me and for my friends. I secretly went to school at the teacher's house because I knew that learning was important for me, and for my future. But coming to a real school is the best thing. Above all, I am really excited that I will be able to take books home to read."

For children in refugee camps, the struggle to get a decent education is even harder. Refugee camps are places that begin as temporary campsites, when people have been forced to leave their home – maybe because of war or a natural disaster like an earthquake or flood. These people have had to leave their homes quickly, and they come with very little. Sometimes it can take quite a long time for aid agencies, like UNICEF, to get everything into the camps that the refugees need.

Many thousands of people might live in one refugee camp, and they need essential supplies like water and shelter to be able to go on living their lives, until they can return home. Sadly, sometimes people have to live in refugee camps for years because they cannot go home. For these children, education is incredibly important, as it may be the only way they can make their way in an uncertain world

Conclusion

How do you think the children and teachers in our school would manage if we had no books, paper, pens and pencils? And, of course, there would be no computers or internet.

[You will likely get some interesting, revealing comments. To counter any negative remarks, you might want to use the following conclusion.]

There is a saying, “The child cannot wait.” This means that childhood is so short, and there is so much a child needs to be able to grow up healthy and ready to be an adult, their lives cannot be put on hold until the situation gets better – their needs must be met now.

What needs do children have that are so important for their growth and development?

[This is an opportunity to see if your pupils are relating what they have learnt about wants and needs in relation to their own lives, and to the lives of children like Mina.]

Did you notice the photographs I’ve been showing you during this assembly? What did you notice about all of them?

[They are all of children at school.]

What do the classrooms look like?

Do you need a fabulous classroom to be able to learn well?

[Project Satoshi Kitamura’s illustration of Articles 28 and 29.]

Why do you think we are looking at this picture today?

[Describe how it is an illustration of article 28 – the right to go to school.]

Remember, our school provides teaching and a place to learn, and it is your responsibility to make the most of it.

Today is World Book Day and across the world millions of children, families, schools and libraries are struggling to get books. Our school has a good library. We can buy books at the shops or borrow them from a library – it is easy for us to take books for granted. Is there any action we can take to enable more children to enjoy their right to education and have access to books like we do?

9. FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT



A woman picks tea leaves near her home in Kericho, Kenya
@Unicef/Appleton



MARCH

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, place of birth, religion, politics, disability, and status.

Article 24

All children and young people have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay alive, healthy and safe.

Keywords

- Choice
- Harmony
- Justice
- Fairness
- Rights
- Respect

Resources

- A bunch of five bananas
- A few other groceries displayed on a table to represent a shop
- Shopping bag for the customer
- Old threadbare clothing for one child
- You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the FAIRTRADE mark (unicef.uk/fairtrade).
- You may want to display or project the image shown above of a woman picking tea leaves in Kenya: unicef.uk/fairtrade2.

Five banners with captions as follows:

- **Banner 1** (shopkeeper): (front) 40c; (reverse) To sell Fairtrade bananas, I still get 40c
- **Banner 2** (farmer): (front) 12c; (reverse) To farm Fairtrade bananas, I get 15c
- **Banner 3** (exporter): (front) 35c; (reverse) To export Fairtrade bananas, I only get 22c
- **Banner 4** (importer): (front) 10c; (reverse) To import Fairtrade bananas, I still get 10c
- **Banner 5** (child): (front) 3c; (reverse) To grow Fairtrade bananas, I get 15c

Pupil Participation

Six children to play the shopkeeper, customer, child, importer, exporter and farmer.

Assembly Content

[The shopkeeper is standing behind the table of goods.]

Today, we are going to see a short play and we will talk about it afterwards.

[Customer enters the scene with a shopping bag.]

Customer: I would like a bunch of bananas please.

Shopkeeper: Handing the customer the bunch of bananas. That will be €1 please.

Customer: Thank you. Hands over money and walks out of shop.

[Shopkeeper holds up banner 1 that reads 40c. Outside the shop, the customer is met by a child.]

Child: Excuse me! Sorry to disturb you. My family grew the bananas that you are carrying. Would you mind telling me what you paid for them?

Customer: €1. That's 20c a banana. Bananas are the most popular fruit in Ireland, so your family must be rich.

Child: Oh, if only! The truth is my family only gets 3c for that bunch of bananas.

Customer: 3c! Where does the other 97c go?

Child: Well look!

[Points to the banner behind the shopkeeper.]

For a start, the shopkeeper gets 40p. Then some goes to the farmer who owns the land my family grow bananas on...

[Points to the farmer who holds up banner reading 12c]

... and some goes to the people who package the bananas and send them to countries like Ireland...

[Points to exporter who holds up banner reading 35c]

...and the rest goes to the people who pick them up when they arrive, separate them into bunches, and deliver them to the shops so you can buy them.

[Points to importer, who holds up banner reading 10c]

Every day, me and my family tend to the banana trees. We plant them, weed them, water them, pick the fruit, and pack them into boxes for collection. And for that, we get 3c.

[Holds up banner reading 3c]

My parents cannot afford to send us to school, or to buy us the shoes and books we need.

My little brother is ill and the medicine he needs is really expensive.

Customer: Well. This really doesn't seem very fair. What can we do about it?

Child: If everyone bought fairly traded bananas then we'd get more money for our work. We would get a fair wage. Look!

[Each person turns round their banner, and reads out what is written on the reverse]

Shopkeeper: To sell Fairtrade bananas, I still get 40c.

Importer: To import Fairtrade bananas, I still get 10c.

Exporter: To export Fairtrade bananas, I only get 22c.

Farmer: To farm Fairtrade bananas, I get 15c.

Child: To grow Fairtrade bananas, I get 15c.

Customer: But isn't it more expensive to buy Fairtrade bananas?

Child: Yes, it is a bit more expensive but you are helping to ensure that the people who grow the bananas get a fair wage and are better able to look after their family. That's only fair, isn't it?

Conclusion

After the play, ask the assembly the following questions:

- At the beginning of the play, who was making the most money from bananas?
- Who made the second largest amount of money?
- Do you think this is fair?
- Do you think that we should buy Fairtrade bananas?
- Why?
- How can you tell whether they are Fairtrade?
- Do you think this is a matter of rights and responsibilities? Whose?

[There could be wide range of responses looking at the responsibilities of people in Ireland to pay a fair price so children in other countries are able to realise their rights to education, health, nutritious food, and so on.]



The FAIRTRADE mark

10. INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION



Children hold hands in Soweto Township, South Africa.
@Unicef/Prinsloo



21 MARCH

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, place of birth, religion, politics, disability, and status.

Article 12

All children and young people have the right to give their opinion and for adults to listen and take them seriously.

Article 30

All children and young people have the right to practice their own culture, language and religion.

Article 42

Governments should make knowledge of the rights in the Convention known to adults and children.

Keywords

- Choice
- Fairness
- Respect
- Equality
- Freedom
- Rights
- Justice
- Harmony
- Tolerance

Resources

- A shop – jars, produce, till and so on. A coffee shop – tables, chairs, cups, and so on.
- If possible, you may want to display or project the image shown above of children holding hands in Soweto, South Africa: [unicef.uk/racialdisc](https://www.unicef.uk/racialdisc).

Pupil Participation

Four children to act in a play.

- **Vesna** – a Roma woman. Vesna is neatly dressed and wearing a brightly coloured

scarf over her head.

- **Shop manager** – not Roma. Boy or girl, smartly dressed.
- **Anita** – not Roma. Dressed like Vesna, apart from the brightly coloured scarf.
- **Government official** – not Roma.

Assembly Content

Hands up everyone who thinks they are important!

[Hopefully lots of hands will go up. Look around at everyone who has their hands up.]

Would you say that the person next to you is important?

[Depending on the children, you may get unanimous nods, or some children may look a little sceptical.]

What do all children have in common?

[You may receive an enormous number of answers here. Eventually get to the point that all children have rights.]

Let's look at rights a little more closely by watching this play.

The play

[The shop manager takes up their position behind the counter. Enter Vesna.]

Vesna: Stops to read an advert in the shop window. Shop assistant wanted ... Hmmm, I need a job. I'll go in. Maybe they will give the job to me.

[Vesna opens the door to the shop and goes in. The manager looks up as she enters and

sneers.]

Vesna: Hello. I've come about the job.

Manager: Oh. What is your name?

Vesna: Vesna

Manager: Vesna, that's a Roma name isn't it? Well, Vesna, I have to wait for more people apply. Why don't you come back tomorrow?

Vesna: Oh, alright. She leaves.

[Outside the shop she says to herself]

You would think s/he would be happy to interview me now. Never mind, I will come again tomorrow.

[Next day. Vesna returns to the shop.]

Vesna: Good morning. Do you remember me? I came about the job yesterday, and you told me to come back. I would still like the job.

Manager: Oh, oh. [Looks embarrassed] I'm sorry, I'm still waiting for more applicants so I can interview everyone at once. Can you come back in a few days?

Vesna: Yes, yes I can. Certainly. Thank you. Goodbye.

[Vesna leaves the shop and a few days later, she returns to the shop.]

Vesna: Good morning. Do you remember me? Vesna? I am interested in the job as shop assistant. You told me to come back in a few days.

Manager: Oh, yes, I remember. Well, sorry, I have decided to take on someone else.

Vesna: Oh. But you didn't even interview me for the job.

Manager: Well, I thought it would be a long journey for you.

Vesna: But you don't know where I live.

Manager: Well, I'm sorry. Would you please leave?

[Vesna leaves. Outside she says to herself.]

I don't think this is fair. There doesn't seem to be a new assistant and I asked three times to be considered for the job. I am going to talk to my friend Anita.

[Vesna and Anita sitting in a coffee shop.]

Vesna: Anita, I am so pleased to see you. I have been trying to get a job as a shop assistant. The manager kept telling me to come back for an interview and then he said someone else had the job but there is no one else working there. I think it is because I am Roma. Would you help me? Will you go to the shop and ask for a job?

Anita: Of course I will. It's very unfair the way Roma people can't get jobs.

[Anita walks to the shop and opens the door.]

Anita: Good morning. I heard that you need a shop assistant.

Manager: Oh yes, I certainly do. Would you

like the job? Can you start tomorrow?

Anita: Yes, I can. Thank you. I will see you tomorrow.

[Anita walks back to meet Vesna in the coffee shop.]

Anita: You are right Vesna. The manager offered me the job straight away. What can we do to stop this discrimination?

Vesna: I know what I am going to do. I am going to report the manager to the Government officials who work against racial discrimination.

[A few days later, a Government official enters the shop.]

Government official: Good morning. Are you the manager of this shop?

Manager: Yes, yes I am. Can I help you?

Official: I think you can. I am following up on a complaint made against you by Vesna Burowski. I think you refused her a job recently.

Manager: Well, yes. I felt that Vesna would find it difficult to work here, because of the distance she would have to travel to work each day. It's difficult to run a shop if staff are always late. I prefer to appoint someone local.

Official: I am afraid that is not good enough. The girl you have given the job to lives in the same street as Vesna. I think you didn't give Vesna the job just because she is a Roma, and that is not allowed. You are going to have to go to court for racial discrimination.

Manager: But, but ...

[The Government official escorts the Manager out of the shop. Later, Vesna and Anita are sitting in the coffee shop again.]

Anita: How are you Vesna? I haven't seen you for some time. How did things go with the discrimination case against that shop manager?

Vesna: It went well. The shop manager had to give me some money because of his discrimination against me. I still haven't been able to find a job though.

[End]

Conclusion

There is discrimination against different groups of people in every country, including this one. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that every child, regardless of race, religion or culture has all the rights in the Convention.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says the same thing – that everyone is born free and should be treated in the same way. Everyone is equal, despite differences in language, sex, colour, belief and nationality, and has the right to live in freedom and safety. Sadly, in some countries, people are very poor, imprisoned, hurt or even killed just because of who they are.

March 21/today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This day was created by the United Nations nearly 50 years ago (1960) because of events in South Africa, which at that time had a government

run by white people that discriminated against black people. One way they discriminated against them was by making the black school children do all their lessons in a language called Afrikaans, a language spoken only in South Africa. School children wanted their lessons in English, so they could communicate with far more people and get better jobs. Eventually all the school children in a place called Soweto had a demonstration and marched through the streets. The first child to be killed was a 13-year-old boy called Hector. Hundreds more children were shot and arrested for speaking out against discrimination.

Fortunately, a very famous man called Nelson Mandela led the struggle for change in South Africa and now everyone in South Africa, whether black or white, has equal rights.

Prejudice and discrimination are allowed to continue because people ignore their existence or else support these views. It takes courage to stand up for the rights of everyone, and speak out against prejudice and discrimination. But if everyone does, then they can be defeated.

We need to act on the words of the American author, William Faulkner, who said:

“Never be afraid to raise your voice against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world would do this, it would change the earth.”

Will you try to speak out against prejudice and discrimination?

[Wait for response.]

Good. The world will be a better place each time you do that.

All people should be treated equally. Everyone has the same rights.

Follow-up work:

1. Find out about Amnesty International: an organisation that helps people who have been unfairly treated because of their beliefs.
2. Consider the things/opinions and beliefs which are valued in school. Talk about them and display them in a prominent position.
3. In what ways could it be made easier for people to have freedom of expression? In your community? Around the world?
4. Could you support a local cause and make the cause better known by sharing their opinions and needs? How?

11. SPRING EQUINOX AND EARTH DAY

Babette Cole's illustration of Article 6 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
@Unicef



21 MARCH

Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion and for adults to listen and take you seriously.

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay alive.

Articles 29

Education should teach children and young people to protect the environment

Global Goals Link

Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation
Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities
Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production
Goal 13 – Climate action

Key Words

- Global Goals
- Helping
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Harmony
- Rights

Resources

- A bunch of flowers or foliage, so you can give each child a flower or branch. A basket full of litter.
- A world globe (to highlight the northern/southern hemisphere and the equator).
- You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of Babette Cole's illustration of Article 6, shown above: [unicef.uk/article6](https://www.unicef.uk/article6).

Pupil Participation

A girl will need to read the speech by Severn Cullis-Suzukis.

Assembly Content

Today is a very special day. It is the first day of spring, and Earth Day. Earth Day is celebrated

on the equinox to mark the moment that spring begins in the northern hemisphere and autumn in the southern hemisphere. At this moment, night and day are equal length anywhere on Earth. Someone standing on the equator at noon will not cast a shadow. Earth Day is intended to inspire awareness of and appreciation for the Earth's environment. It was created to remind us of our shared responsibility to protect the planet.

At the moment of the equinox, the Peace Bell is rung at the United Nations headquarters in New York. In place of a bell, today we are going to celebrate the occasion with what we can find on the Earth.

[Call up children from the audience and ask them what they would rather have: a flower or branch, or a piece of litter out of the basket. When no one wants the litter, ask them why not.]

Well, I am glad no one wants the litter. There is so much rubbish in the world. We have to dispose of our litter carefully so that we don't ruin the environment. We all have a responsibility to look after our environment.

Today, I am going to tell you about some children who are trying hard to help their communities and our planet.

First, we are going to hear about some pupils in Brazil who learned about The Global Goals for Sustainable Development and decided then need take action in their community by cleaning up the stream that runs through the heart of it. Everyone who lived beside the stream used to throw their rubbish into the water, including scraps of food. The result was

that it smelt and made people ill. The stream also got blocked and flooded every time there was heavy rain.

The young people cleaned up the stream. They quickly realised that clearing the stream was one thing, but keeping it clear was another. For people almost immediately threw things into it again. They realised that if their health and environment was to improve, then they would have to change the behaviour of people in the neighbourhood.

The young people decided they would have to educate the people who lived near the stream about why it was important to keep the water clear. They used different methods for different age groups. With children, they used puppets; with adolescents, they used dance and drama. They went from house to house to talk to adults. It was difficult because not everyone would listen. Not many people admitted to throwing rubbish in the stream. They said, "We don't throw our rubbish in the stream, but our neighbours do." Some people couldn't even see why they should stop.

In April 2015, something happened that made the community stop and think. When the heavy rains came, the stream did not flood because of the young people's work. The young people told the community that it was because the stream wasn't blocked with rubbish and so the water could run away. Now the neighbourhood could see for themselves the importance of what the children had achieved.

The mayor congratulated all the young people involved and asked them to march through the streets with banners. Now, the pupils are working on educating people

about the importance of hygiene and environmental health.

[The pupil chosen to read the speech should step forward now.]

Earth Day is a reminder that we all have a responsibility to look after the environment that we live in, and that we all need to think of the effect that our actions have on the world in which we live. Severn Cullis-Suzukis, a 10-year-old girl from Canada, made the following speech:

"I am only a child, yet I know that if all the money spent on war was spent in ending poverty and finding environmental answers, what a wonderful place this world would be. In school you teach us not to fight with others, to work things out, to respect others, to clean up our mess, not to hurt other creatures, to share and not be greedy. Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do? You grown-ups say you love us, but I challenge you to make your actions reflect your words."

Severn's speech was made at the first Earth Summit in 1992, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. What she said made some people cry and, when she had finished, people stood and clapped her for a long time. At the time, Severn thought that powerful people who could make a difference had really heard what she said. But 10 years later she wondered what had been accomplished and declared:

"Real environmental change depends on us. We can't wait for our leaders. We have to focus on what our responsibilities are and how we can make the change happen."

Conclusion

What could we do as a school to protect our environment?

[This is also the time for talking about a school environmental project. Pupil suggestions might include: picking up litter, recycling rubbish, planting flowers and trees, conserving water, organising a community "clear-up". People could walk more, drive their cars less, grow some of their own food, or perhaps join some group that is helping to preserve our planet.]

[Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Babette Cole's illustration of Article 6).]

Why are we looking at this picture today?

As well as showing plants, it also has little people – who grow as they jump from plant to plant – making the link between growing plants and growing young people.

12. WORLD WATER DAY



A girl drinks clean, safe water from a tap in the village of Dafo, in Djibouti
@Unicef/Noorani



22 MARCH

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay alive.

Key words

- Equality
- Help
- Justice
- Responsibility
- Rights

Resources

- A number of plastic buckets.
- Pictures showing water collection and use, around the world. Include a picture of Ryan, whose story you are going to tell, from his website.

- You may also want to display or project the image above of a girl drinking clean water in Djibouti: [unicef.uk/waterday](https://www.unicef.uk/waterday).

- Share the link to www.ryanswell.ca with your pupils.

Pupil participation

Pupils could mime parts of this story. It needs an older boy to play Ryan. He sits at one side of the stage.

On the other side, a class could play children in the Ugandan village. Each child has an empty bucket.

Assembly content

Uggggggggghhhhh!

[You enter the assembly carrying a bucket of water. You might spill a little and pant with the effort.]

Ahhhhhhhhhhh, that's better!

[Put down your bucket of water. Stand up straight and rub your back and hands.]

That's a relief. Do you know how far I've carried that bucket of water?

[The pupils may just say that you got it from the kitchen.]

Yes, that's right, from the kitchen. But if I lived in a country where people do not have a good water supply, I could have carried that water for more than 2 miles. Do you know that we all need a recommended 20 litres of water per person per day for washing, drinking, and cooking? Imagine having to carry 20 litres for each person you live with for more than 2 miles.

And do you know who is often responsible for collecting the water? Girls. Like this one.

[Show the photograph of the girl carrying the water bucket.]

[The children sitting at the side of the stage, stand up, pick up their buckets and do a circuit of the stage/hall, staggering as though the buckets were very heavy. At the end, they give their bucket to an adult and sit down again at the side of the stage.]

Why do people go to so much effort to get water?

[Look for some of the following answers: we need water to ... drink ... cook ... wash ourselves ... wash our clothes ... water the garden ... swim ... flush the toilet and so on.]

March 22/today is World Water Day and I'm going to tell you about a boy called Ryan Hreljac.

[The boy playing Ryan stands up and comes and sits cross-legged in front of you, as if at school.]

Ryan lives in Canada. When he was just 6 years old, at his primary school near Ottawa, the capital of Canada, he heard about the millions of children in Africa who do not have clean water to drink.

Ryan learnt about the shortage of water and the problems this caused. He was told that about €40 would provide a well for a small community in Uganda, a country in East Africa. And Ryan decided he must do something to help.

What do you think he did?

[Take a range of answers.]

Ryan decided that he had to do something to make it easier for people to get water, and that he would raise €40 to buy a well.

He talked about it to his parents and they suggested he could earn the money by doing extra jobs around the house.

[Ryan jumps up and role plays doing these jobs.]

Ryan vacuumed, washed windows and dishes, and did lots of other chores. With great determination, he saved all the money that he earned. It took him just four months to raise the €40 he needed.

[Ryan mimes taking the money to Watercan, then going back and raising more money.]

Ryan's mother took Ryan and his money to a Canadian aid agency called Watercan, and they were delighted with his gift. Ryan asked them how his money would be used. They explained to Ryan that €40 would buy a hand pump. They also told Ryan that it cost about €1,500 to drill a well. Ryan listened. When he got home, he decided he must raise more money! One well just wasn't enough when there were so many people without water.

Ryan asked other people to help him. He collected donations at school and from family and friends. He continued doing odd jobs and eventually he managed to raise €500. Watercan added €1,000 so that a well could be drilled.

Ryan asked if his well could be dug near a school. The place chosen was the village of Angolo, in northern Uganda. Angolo's nearest water was more than 3 miles away. There had been several years of drought and any available water was dirty. As a result, one in five children in Angolo died before the age of five.

[At this point, the class of children sitting at the side of the stage stand up and form a line across the stage. Then, every fifth child drops as if dead. Ryan stands and watches them, he looks horrified. The "dead" children remain motionless where they have fallen and could stay there for the rest of the assembly, if they are able to stay still that long! The other children return to the side of the stage.]

When Ryan visited Watercan he was introduced to Shibru, the man in charge of digging Watercan's wells in Uganda. Shibru explained that the well would be dug by hand. It could be dug much quicker using mobile drilling equipment, but the equipment cost more than €15,000.

After hearing this, you might be able to guess what Ryan decided ... yes, he set himself the challenge of raising even more money!

It was at this point that an Ottawa newspaper wrote about Ryan's determination to raise money for the well. A local TV station also picked up the story. At school, his teacher put a watering can in the classroom for donations and Ryan sold bottled water to help raise more funds.

Ryan's class wrote letters to children in Angolo and Ryan began to wish he could visit Angolo.

A neighbour was so impressed by Ryan's dedication to helping the village get clean water that he donated some air miles to Ryan. Other people followed suit and soon there were enough air miles for Ryan and his family to take the trip to Angolo. Ryan saw what a difference having fresh, clean water in the village had made to the people there.

[Ryan could mime flying to Uganda, ending up by the class of children sitting at the side of the stage and they could welcome him. Possibly they could show him their new well. The "dead" lying on the stage are a reminder of the thousands of children who die every day from diseases caused by dirty water.]

Conclusion

This true story shows us how a single person can make a difference if they are really determined. Ryan now has his own charity, called Ryan's Well Foundation, and so far it has built more than 460 wells in 16 countries, bringing water to nearly 600,000 people.

[This figure was taken from the Ryan's Well website. Visit the website if you want the latest figures.]

When he was 11 years old, he was asked to work on children's initiatives with the World Health Organization (WHO). Today, Ryan is a UNICEF Global Youth Leader and an expert speaker on water, health and poverty. Ryan's determination means that many children around the world will have a better life because their right to clean water is met.

Does anyone here have a strong determination to do something, either for themselves or others?

13. WORLD HEALTH DAY



Six-month-old Abdul, from Liberia, eats life-saving food to treat his malnourishment
©Unicef/Maule-ffinch



7 APRIL

Article 24

All children and young people have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay alive, healthy and safe.

Key words

- Choice
- Justice
- Rights
- Equality
- Learning
- Health
- Responsibility
- Environment

Resources

- Paper or card to make placards. You may wish to project or display the image above of

a boy eating life-saving food: [unicef.uk/whd](https://www.unicef.uk/whd).

Pupil participation

You will need eight pupils to hold up placards and to read out a statement written on the back. Each placard will have a letter on the front, when the placards are held up in the right order they should read 'MY HEALTH'. For example, the first child will hold up the placard with 'M' on the front and read out the statement on the reverse.

Assembly content

Who doesn't feel very well today?

[Ask those who respond why they are feeling unwell.]

Who is responsible for keeping us healthy?

[You might get an interesting range of answers. Look for: my parents; the doctor; me.]

This assembly is about keeping healthy. You all have the right to the best possible health, but

what does that mean?

Today, we are going to remind ourselves of all the things we need to stay healthy.

[In turn, the children holding placards come to the front of the stage and read out their statement about health. Once each child has read their statement, they step back and stand in a line holding up their placard to show the letter on the front. When the last child has read out his/her statement, the placards should read 'MY HEALTH'.]

Statement one – Enough sleep

We need at least eight hours sleep a night. While we are asleep, our bodies are building and growing, and repairing any damage that may have happened during the day.

Statement two – Nutritious food

What we eat is the fuel our bodies need to grow. If we want to be healthy, our bodies need the right food. We should try to eat five pieces of fruit and vegetables a day.

Statement three – Water

Two-thirds of our body weight is water. We should try to drink at least 1 litre of water a day to keep our bodies well hydrated.

Statement four – Good hygiene

Germs breed in dirt, so it is important that we keep our bodies clean. It is particularly important to keep our hands clean. We pick up germs on our hands all the time and if we put our fingers in our mouths, or when we pick up

food, we put the germs into our bodies.

Statement five – Exercise

Our bodies need to be exercised every day, so our muscles and ligaments are stretched and our bones, lungs and heart grow and stay strong and healthy.

Statement six – A clean environment

In the same way that we need to keep our bodies clean, our environment needs to be clean too. We can make sure we keep our environment clean by not dropping litter, keeping the classroom and our bedrooms tidy.

Statement seven – Health care

All children have a right to health care. In this country, this is usually provided free and starts before we are born. Vaccinations against diseases like measles, whooping cough, polio and TB are free and will keep us healthy.

Statement eight – Keeping safe

It is up to adults to keep us safe, but it is also up to us to be sensible and not put ourselves in danger. We shouldn't make friends with adults that our parents/carers don't know, and we shouldn't play in dangerous places such as busy roads, on a railway line or near deep water.

Each year, more than 11 million children die from the effects of disease and inadequate nutrition.

Globally, more than one in five children die before they reach their fifth birthday.

Conclusion

An important organisation, the World Health Organisation, was created by the United Nations on 7 April 1948. The World Health Organisation is also known as the W-H-O. The WHO tells countries what they can do to ensure better health for their people. For example, it was the WHO that advised that children should drink six to eight glasses of water each day – three to four of them while at school.

Health is defined by the WHO as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease. It is also up to you, your families, the school, health authorities and the Government to ensure that you grow up with the best possible health.

14. WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



John Burningham's illustration of Article 13 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child @Unicef



5 JUNE

Article 12

Children have a right to say what they think should happen when decisions are being made that affect them – that is, children's voices should be heard.

Article 13

Children have the right to get and share information.

Article 29

Education should include the development of respect for the natural environment.

Key words

- Helping
- Rights
- Respect
- Learning
- Listening

- Voice
- Responsibility
- Safety

Resources

- Sunhats and/or towels and/or buckets and spades for 10+ children
- A beach ball
- A tray and four plastic glasses
- A rug on a raised area at the back of the stage to represent the hotel
- A cymbal
- You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of John Burningham's illustration of Article 13, pictured above: unicef.uk/article13.

Pupil participation

10+ children playing Ann and her family plus other holidaymakers on the beach and a waiter. Children should go barefoot, roll up trousers and so on.

All the children watching the assembly can represent 'the sea'. You could rehearse a

Mexican wave and a 'whooshing' noise to be made when indicated by the narrator, who you may wish to be played by an older child or by a teacher.

Assembly Content

Narrator: What is happening in this picture?

[Elicit that the boy is trying to tell his father that something important is happening, but his father isn't listening.]

Narrator: Today we are going to see a short play about a little girl who tried to tell the grown-ups around her when something important was happening. Ann was 8 years old and her brother Jack was 5 when they went on holiday with their parents. There could have been a very sad ending to their story if it had not been for something Ann had learned at school. For Christmas 2004, Ann and her brother Jack went on holiday to Thailand. They stayed in a lovely hotel right by the sea. On Christmas Day they opened their presents on the beach. It was perfect. On Boxing Day, they went to the beach again and settled down near the gently lapping sea.

[Ann, Jack and their parents enter, followed by more children, acting as families and parents, all dressed in sun hats, some with towels under their arms. They mime laying towels out for sunbathing, making sandcastles, throwing a beach ball, paddling and so on.]

Narrator: The sun was beating down and the palm trees were swaying in the breeze. Ann and Jack started making sandcastles. A waiter from the hotel brought them some ice cold drinks.

[Waiter brings drinks. At this point the narrator stops talking and the children start talking, shouting and laughing for 30 seconds until ...]

Narrator: Suddenly, everyone on the beach went quiet and looked out at the sea.

[Everyone on the beach stands up and starts looking out to sea, shading their eyes.]

Narrator: Or where the sea used to be. The beach was now enormous and the sea could hardly be seen. The beach was full of fish and crabs that had been left behind on the sea bed. People stopped and looked at the flapping fish and scuttling crabs.

Holidaymaker 1: Hey! Look at this fish. Shall we take it into the hotel for dinner?!

Ann was as puzzled as the others until she remembered a documentary she had seen.

Ann: Tsunami! Tsunami! We have to get off the beach. It's a tsunami! Mum! Mum! Come back. We've got to get off the beach!

Narrator: Ann's mother and father looked at each other and at their frantic daughter. Her father spoke to another man nearby and they laughed. Ann snatched up her brother Jack and started to carry him up the beach. He struggled in her arms. [Actors act out what the narrator describes]

Ann: We have to get away. We don't have much time.

Narrator: By this time people could see, far off, that the sea was rising up.

Ann: The wave will kill us! Please, let's all go now.

Narrator: Everyone was so confused. What was happening on their perfect holiday beach? But now, not so far away, they could see the sea getting bigger and bigger.

Suddenly panic broke out. People turned and ran up the beach. Everyone ran to the highest place, the top floor of the hotel. They were only just in time.

[People start to run towards the rug on the raised area at the back of the stage the mat. Indicate for the children in the audience to perform a Mexican wave with a huge 'whooshing' sound. The narrator could bang a cymbal to indicate for them to stop.]

The giant wave crashed against the hotel, swept past and then back again, carrying trees, beach chairs, rocks and boats. Everyone started to go back downstairs.

Ann: Wait! There may be another wave. We have to wait. It may be bigger than the first.

Narrator: This time people listened to her. Some even asked her questions. Half an hour later a bigger wave struck. For the next two hours more waves came, all bigger than the first. This beach, where Ann gave the warning, was one of the few places hit by the tsunami where no one was killed.

Conclusion

The adults nearly didn't listen to Ann, because she was only eight years old.

Yet, she knew something nobody else did.

Do you think there's a lesson we could all learn from this true story? What is it?

Today is World Environment Day. This day reminds us of the bigger picture, the world environment. The tsunami was a natural disaster caused by an earthquake. No one could have prevented the underwater earthquake. But as we have seen, it helps if you know what to do in an emergency.

We all have a responsibility to learn more about how to protect our environment and ourselves, so that we and our families can be safe.

[This story, called *The Christmas Angel* appears in the book *Higher Ground*, published by Chrysalis Children's Books.]

15. WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Thirteen-year-old Ibrahim, from Syria, works on a farm in Sanliurfa, Turkey. @Unicef/Feyizoglu



12 JUNE

Article 28

All children and young people have a right to a primary education.

Article 31

All children and young people have a right to relax and play.

Article 32

Governments should protect children and young people from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.

Key words

- Choice
- Justice
- Safety
- Fairness
- Learning
- Freedom
- Rights

Resources

- Threadbare and dirty clothes for two boys
- A ragged dress for one girl
- A long dress or sari for one girl
- A thin branch
- Two flat baskets – one containing leaves, one containing small stones.
- You may want to display or project the image shown above of Ibrahim working on a farm in Turkey: [unicef.uk/childlabour](https://www.unicef.uk/childlabour).

Pupil participation

Two girls and two boys to play the parts of the child labourers.

Assembly Content

Can you imagine what it would be like to work for 12 hours a day instead of coming to school? To be so tired that you haven't the energy to play? To work for a boss that you are never likely to escape?

Worldwide, there are over 246 million children age 5–17 who have to work. I don't just mean doing a part time job like babysitting, working in a shop, or a paper round. I mean

work that would be hard even for an adult to do. Around 171 million children have to do work that is so dangerous it could seriously damage their health. Most of them have no chance of going to school, even in the evening, so are unlikely to ever be able to improve their lives.

Here are some of their stories.

The child labourers' stories:

[The children playing the labourers take up a position on stage and take it in turns to tell their stories. As each speaks, a photo of the person they are representing is projected behind them.]

Magendra: I'm Magendra. I live in India. I don't really know how old I am because I've never been to school and neither have my parents. I have a job carrying rocks up a hill. At the top, they are thrown into a huge fire called a lime kiln. Eventually they're turned into cement for buildings.

Every day, I carry rocks up to the top of the lime kiln. I go up and down the ladder hundreds of times each day. I don't have any days off. My hands and feet are cut and dry from the rocks and my throat is sore from the smoke.

I have to do this work. My dad is the watchman for the lime kiln. My mum is sick and can't work.

Dad borrowed some money from his boss and promised that I would work for him for free until we have paid back the money. I don't know when that will be. Until then I can't leave, I have no choice but to keep on carrying these rocks.

Babu: I'm Babu. I work with my family on the farm. I don't get paid as my work helps to repay the money my parents borrowed from the village chief.

I work for 12 hours a day, seven days a week looking after the chief's cows. Sometimes I have to walk miles to find good grass for them to eat. I also have to plough the land, weed it and harvest the crops.

My work is worth about €3.50 a month but I never get any money. I have worked for this man for three years, but the money my family owes him is still not paid off. We have to pay back more than we borrowed so I feel like I will be working here for the rest of my life.

My only hope is the evening school in our village. Between seven and nine each evening, children and adults who want to learn but have to work during the day can go to the school. Sometimes I think I might run away to the city and get a better job but I am frightened about what the headman would do to my parents if I didn't work to pay the money back.

Lakshmi: My name is Lakshmi. I am 10 ten years old. My job is making cigarettes. For as long as I can remember I have made cigarettes every day of the week, including weekends. I work from nine in the morning until six at night. I have to make 1,000 cigarettes a day to earn about €3.50 a month.

The place where I work is dark and smoky from the cooking fire in the corner of the room. There is only one dim electric light. Sometimes I can hardly see and my eyes hurt from the smoke. There are six of us making cigarettes. The youngest is Buji, who's six.

She's been working with us for two years. She makes the tobacco leaves soft by scraping them with a pair of scissors. I roll the soft leaves into tubes and then stuff them with loose tobacco. We all sit cross-legged on the floor while we work. Our backs ache after a few hours. The only break is when we go home for an hour to have lunch. When I am at home I have to help my mother by fetching water and sweeping the house.

I make the cigarettes at my boss's house. She has five children who all go to school. I wish I could go too, but my parents owe a lot of money and I have to work until we have paid it off. I don't know when that will be.

Madhamal: I'm Madhamal, I'm 15. These days the younger girls in my community look up to me but it wasn't always like this. I come from a disadvantaged tribal group in my district and my family is very poor. When I was very young I collected firewood to sell. I didn't really like doing that but my family needed the money.

Because of a project called All For Children, my life was turned around and I could access education. The project is a joint project between UNICEF and *H&M* which helps girls in cotton producing states in Southern India get out of work and into school. I loved going to school and it was my dream to become a teacher. But when I was a little bit older my father decided that he wanted me to marry, I said I was too young and this was illegal. He didn't care and said I had to marry anyway.

I didn't want to so I told a teacher from the All For Children project who helped me and the wedding was called off.

Today I am the first child in my community to reach the 9th grade at school and one day I am going to become a teacher myself!

Conclusion

Why do these children have to work?

What do you think should be done so these children don't have to work anymore?

None of you should have jobs yet. There are very strict rules in Ireland that say you have to be at least 13 years old to have a part-time job. Do any of you have brothers or sisters that have jobs before or after school? What do they say about their jobs?

12 June is World Day against Child Labour. It's a day to remind us of the 246 million children who have to work. We can help by learning about their lives and supporting organisations like UNICEF that work all around the world to help all children go to school. UNICEF also makes sure that if children have to work for a few hours a day, they are not doing work that will hurt them.

16. WORLD REFUGEE DAY



A Yemeni girl in a refugee camp in Djibouti
©Unicef/Noorani



20 JUNE

Article 7

Children have the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by their parents.

Article 22

Children who are refugees have the right to special protection and help. Refugee children are entitled to all the rights in the Convention wherever they are.

Article 38

Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Key words

- Freedom
- Respect
- Tolerance
- Fairness

- Rights
- Justice
- Safety

Resources

- Four signs reading as follows:

1. Violence
2. Separation
3. Dangerous journey
4. Torture

- You may want to display or project the image of a refugee from Yemeni, pictured above:
[unicef.uk/yemeni_refugee](https://www.unicef.uk/yemeni_refugee).

Pupil participation

- Four pupils to hold up the signs and read the definitions of refugees.
- Two girls and two boys to play the refugees.

Assembly Content

A refugee is a person who has run away from some danger or problem in their own country. People do not want to be refugees, it is often the only choice they have. Today, we are going

to look at what makes someone a refugee. Currently, there are nine million children and young people who are refugees around the world. Have you heard people talking about refugees coming to this country or about people living in refugee camps in other countries?

Here are some signs to describe what refugees may have experienced before coming to this country.

[Pupils bring in the four signs, one by one, spreading themselves across the stage.]

These signs tell us a little bit about refugees.

[As each 'refugee' enters, they stand beside the appropriate sign and tell their story after the sign holder briefly describes what they have been through.]

Sign 1 holder: [Holds up sign reading 'Violence'.] A person can become a refugee after being forced to leave their homes by soldiers or gunmen. Their family members may have been threatened or killed.

Sarandra: [Stands beside sign 1.] My name is Sarandra. I was 14 years old when my family and I had to leave our country, Kosovo. There was fighting there and my family was attacked because we belonged to a minority ethnic group. Men came to our street in the middle of the night with guns and there was shooting, even bombs. This happened for many nights and we would hide in the cellar of my uncle's house, with lots of other people like us.

We heard that soldiers were going to people's houses and giving them one hour to get out. One night they came for us. We took what

we could carry and left. We stayed with some relatives, until one day my father was arrested by the police. He escaped three days later and came back to us but he looked like a different person. He looked so ill and his face was grey. We packed up and moved again but feared the soldiers would find us. One day my parents decided we would leave the country. With thousands of other people like us, we started to walk. We only had what we could carry.

Eventually, we crossed the border into Macedonia. We had to stay in a refugee camp – it was crowded. We had to queue for hours for everything. We saw a list of countries that had agreed to take in refugees from our country. One of the countries was the UK and we applied. We were accepted and now we have been here for years. I love the UK because I have school, friends and peace but I feel I lost my childhood. My parents have never looked as happy as they look in a photograph taken before the troubles began.

Sign 2 holder: [Holds up sign reading 'Separation'.] A child can become a refugee if their parents send them away from the danger in their own country to a safer country. But this means they have to manage in a strange country on their own.

Virginia: [Stands beside sign 2.] My name is Virginia. I live in a refugee camp with my sister Elizabeth. We are from Burundi. There was fighting in Burundi between the two main groups of people – the Hutus and the Tutsis. Our family are Hutus. We had to leave our home and become refugees after Tutsi soldiers threatened to kill our dad. Mum and Dad said we must go with our neighbour to Tanzania, one of the countries next to Burundi.

We left home very quickly with only some food and the clothes we were wearing. It was a really long journey. We were scared almost all of the time, especially when we saw people who had been killed.

When we arrived at the refugee camp in Tanzania, we were given one room in a small hut. We were looked after by UNICEF, who gave us a plastic sheet, a bucket, two cooking pots and a 10-litre water can for fetching water. We also each got a bowl a plate and a spoon, a blanket and some soap. Every week we are given food to cook.

People come and talk to us and try to help us feel happier. One day when we are ready, we will go to a primary school in the camp. But what we really want is to go home and be with Mum and Dad again. We have not heard from them for over a year

Sign 3 holder: [Holds up sign reading 'Dangerous journey'.] Some people pay a lot of money or face life-threatening journeys to become refugees because they face even greater danger in their own country.

Christopher: [Stands beside sign 3.] There is so much fighting in my country, Sudan. I was so desperate to leave that I would have risked almost anything to find safety and the chance of a better future. I had said in public that I disagreed with the violence and I was told that soldiers were after me.

If there is a fire in your house, you will jump; you don't think about how high the building is. The risk is big, but you take it to save your life. I paid €2,000 to get on a boat to escape.

I was smuggled onto a cargo ship and was at sea for two months with seven other people. I didn't see the light of the sun for so long. We lived on water and very small food rations provided by the people who had smuggled us onto the boat. I thought I was going to France, but I ended up in Cyprus.

I was lucky though, at least I arrived safely in Cyprus. I have heard that thousands of people who pay to escape on boats, die en route.

I have asked to be allowed to stay here in Cyprus. I make some money selling African crafts to tourists. It isn't much but at least nobody will come after me here and try to hurt me. I am learning Greek and hope to go to evening school.

Sign 4 holder: [Holds up sign reading 'Torture'.] People who disagree with their country's government may leave their countries and become refugees. They may have already been jailed and tortured for their beliefs or risk being captured if they stay. If they flee, they may have to leave family members behind.

Ibrahim: [Stands beside sign 4.] I came to England with my wife Zeynep two years ago. I was a member of a political group that was against our country's government. They put me in prison for two years and I was beaten and tortured. Even after I was let out of prison, the police were always after me. If anything against the government happened, I would be taken in and questioned. They beat me up to try to make me confess. Even my eldest son, who is 12, was stopped by the police.

Zeynep and I decided we had to leave but we could not afford tickets for both us and our children. We left our four children with my mother. We thought we would be able to bring them to the UK soon. But once we got here, we found out that we have to be here for at least four years before we can apply for them to join us. Even though the UK has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that says families have a right to be together, the UK has said that it will not allow other family members to enter until we have been through all the procedures, which takes years.

We phone the children once a month and we all cry. My mother is getting old and the children are getting older and harder for her to look after. We need to bring them here so we can look after them and be a family again.

Conclusion

As you can see, every refugee has a different story. Which story did you find caught your attention most? Why?

20 June is World Refugee Day. What do you think we could do to help refugees?

17. WORLD TEACHERS' DAY



The School Director
of a primary school
in Svay Kal village,
Cambodia
@Unicef/Brown



5 OCTOBER

Article 3

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 28

All children have a right to education.

Key words

- Freedom
- Responsibility
- Equality
- Learning
- Rights
- Tolerance

Resources

- Large curtain or rug
- Costumes of dress and trousers with headscarf for girls (optional)

- Costumes for soldiers (optional: toy guns)
- Stage should be bare, except in the centre where the “secret school” is. The secret school should be hidden from the audience. Use a large curtain or rug for the school “entrance”. Pupils need to be able to pass through the entrance.
- You may want to display or project the image above of a teacher in Cambodia: [unicef.uk/WSTD](https://www.unicef.uk/WSTD).

Pupil participation

- 15 or more children
- At least a dozen children (mostly girls) are needed to play schoolchildren. A girl is also needed to play the teacher and two pupils to play soldiers.

Assembly Content

[For dramatic effect, it may be a good idea to simply announce that there is going to be a short play. Set the stage as described above before the pupils enter for assembly.]

This morning we are going to see a short play.

Directions

At the centre of the stage hangs a large curtain or rug. It is important that it is not clear what goes on behind the curtain or rug until all the children are in.

Soldiers patrol backwards and forwards on the bare stage.

Schoolchildren enter in ones and twos from both sides of the stage, occasionally looking behind them. The children have their schoolbooks hidden in shopping baskets or under their clothes. They need to be wary of the soldiers although not hiding from them. In ones and twos, the children make their way across the stage and slip behind the rug or curtain.

There could be an incident where some girls are stopped by the soldiers, who ask questions like "Where are you going?" "What are you carrying?" The girls need to reply as innocently as possible, saying "We are going to the market," and "We are carrying fruit and vegetables."

When all the children are behind the rug or curtain, the soldiers move to the sides of the stage facing the audience. The rug or curtain is pulled away to reveal all the children sitting close together on the floor. The children's shoes are piled up close to where the rug was. They are looking at their schoolbooks and the teacher is teaching them in a whisper.

There could be an incident where the children want to laugh and they have to clasp their hands over their mouths so they don't make a noise. The soldiers remain facing the audience. When the children have had some lessons, they take it in turns to put on their

shoes and slip away from the school. Again, they have to walk carefully past the soldiers.

The soldiers leave when all the schoolchildren have left the stage. Once the stage is empty, read out the following story.

The story behind the play

Narrator: The play is based on the true life story of Habiba Khilwat, a teacher in Afghanistan. In the 1990s, the Taliban Government of Afghanistan banned girls from going to school. Women teachers and girl pupils were stopped from attending school and mostly forbidden to leave their homes unless they went with a male member of their family. Habiba was one of the teachers who the government told to go home and not teach.

But Habiba missed teaching her class and decided that she would open a secret school in her home.

She knew she was putting herself and her family in danger, but her parents gave her their blessing.

Habiba visited the parents of her former pupils and invited them to send their children, especially their girls, to her home. The children's parents knew that they must tell no one and ensure their children's journey to school was kept secret.

Habiba's home is near the city of Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. There is a gravel yard with a chicken coop at the side of the house. There is a rug hanging over the doorway, where a dog stands and barks furiously when anyone approaches.

If you visited when the school was a secret, you would find a pile of children's shoes just inside the doorway, hidden from the eyes of passers-by. In Afghanistan, as in many countries, it is polite to remove your shoes when entering a house. Behind the rug hanging over the doorway, children would sit quietly, crossed legged, on mats that covered the concrete floor. Habiba taught in a whisper and the children would smile but they dared not laugh in case they were heard. The children could not call out answers to questions as in a normal classroom. The children loved being there but everything about the school was a secret. They came to school in ones and twos, looking all around to make sure they were not followed or seen going into Habiba's house.

Every day at school spelled danger for Habiba, her pupils and their parents. Everyone lived in fear of the Taliban Government discovering their secret school because they knew Habiba could be sent to prison and everybody would face punishment. Fortunately, the Taliban never discovered the secret and now the Taliban regime is not in power and the children can go to school freely.

With Unicef's help, children continue to be educated in Habiba's house. The children come in shifts to work with their teacher who risked her life because she believed that boys and girls should have a chance to learn.

Conclusion

After reading out Habiba's story, ask the assembly the following questions:

1. What do you think was happening in this play?
2. Why do you think the teacher wanted to carry on teaching even though it was dangerous for her?
3. Why did the pupils want to go even though it was dangerous for them and their families?
4. Would you risk going to school if you knew you would be punished if you were caught?
5. What kind of teacher makes you want to come to school?

The United Nations established 5 October as World Teachers' Day.

6. Why do you think there is a day especially for teachers?
7. What does this day have to do with our play?
8. What do you think we should do on this day?

18. INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION



Children play in the rubble of their school after it was destroyed in the April 2015 earthquake, Nepal.
©Unicef/Matas



13 OCTOBER

Article 6

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 24

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and wellbeing so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 28

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights.

Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Keywords

- Resilience
- Hope
- Evolution
- Adapting

Resources

- If possible, display the cover image shown above of children playing in the rubble of their school in Nepal: unicef.uk/DRR_nepal.
- If possible, display or project the images 1–4 from the following folder: unicef.uk/DRR1.
- Five signs: 'LIFE', 'HEALTH', 'JOBS', 'EDUCATION' and 'SAFETY'
- Two sticks/poles, a big sack/bag, a table to the right of the stage
- A drum (optional)

Pupil Participation:

- Five students to act in a play. Each holds one of the signs ('LIFE', 'HEALTH', 'JOBS', 'EDUCATION' and 'SAFETY'), and is the

representative for that subject.

- One student to beat the drum for the earthquake

Assembly Contents

[Teacher leading the assembly comes on stage and addresses all children. The representatives stand offstage.]

Every year, all over the world natural disasters happen. Can anyone tell me some of the things that happen that could be called a natural disaster?

[Students might call out 'volcano', 'earthquake', 'cyclone' 'hurricane' or similar.]

Every time a disaster occurs, people are affected in lots of ways. Can anyone tell me some of the ways people are affected when there is a disaster?

[Students might suggest things like 'people can die' or 'houses are destroyed'.]

Today we are going to talk about Disaster Risk Reduction. The official definition of 'disaster risk' is 'the potential loss expressed in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur to a particular community or a society due to the impact of a natural hazard'.

What that means is if, for example, we had a serious gale here in Ireland, people would lose their – [representatives step forwards and hold up their signs one by one, reading them out, until they are all standing in a line] – unless we were prepared.

Since the late 1990s, the number of people affected by disasters every year has tripled! A

lot of this is due to climate change, and it looks like disasters will become even more common, so we need to be ready for them.

There are not always ways to prevent disasters from happening, but what we can do is prepare for them so that we reduce the impact they have on our lives. This is called 'Disaster Risk Reduction', and it happens all over the world in many different ways. Our students here are going to act out a play to show you one of the ways that people in a country that is frequently affected by natural hazards are adapting to cope...

Story

[The teacher narrates the following story. The children with the five signs stand on stage holding up the signs.]

In Nepal, at midday on the 25th of April, 2015, the earth began to tremble...

[Student holding drum beats it hard and fast.]

...Experts had warned that a big earthquake was coming, but nobody was really prepared for the devastation that hit Nepal that day.

Not only did lots of buildings crumble, but many people were badly hurt, and many didn't survive.

['Life' and 'safety' representatives fall down. Drummer hits a single drum beat.]

Lots of the people in the areas affected were living on steep mountainsides in small buildings that fell down very easily, including 1,200 health facilities and over 22,400 school classrooms...

['Education' and 'health' representatives fall down. Drummer hits a single drum beat.]

... as well as many thousands of homes and shops.

[‘Jobs’ representative falls down. Drummer hits a single drum beat.]

In the immediate days after the earthquake, the government and lots of other organisations came to help by searching for people trapped in the rubble and sending helicopters out to areas where there had been damage and people had been hurt.

They set up temporary schools and health centres, providing food, medical care, clean water and things like buckets and plastic sheeting so that people could build basic tents to live in.



[Project picture: Image 1.]

But, after a few months, they all decided that, as the experts had said there would be many more earthquakes to come, they would need to start to rebuild permanent schools, health centres and homes, but in a way that meant that next time the damage would not be so bad.

[All representatives come together to talk together quietly in a small circle around the table with the bag and sticks on it.]

The people who designed the buildings made structures that would wobble when an earthquake happened, but were unlikely to fall down. These were used for health facilities, schools and even offices, so that people could shelter in them when an earthquake happened.



[Project picture: Image 2. ‘Life’ and ‘jobs’ representatives each take a stick and stand to the front left of the stage.]

The teachers who worked in the schools taught children survival techniques like crawling under a table when an earthquake happened, so that they would be protected from falling bricks or rubble.

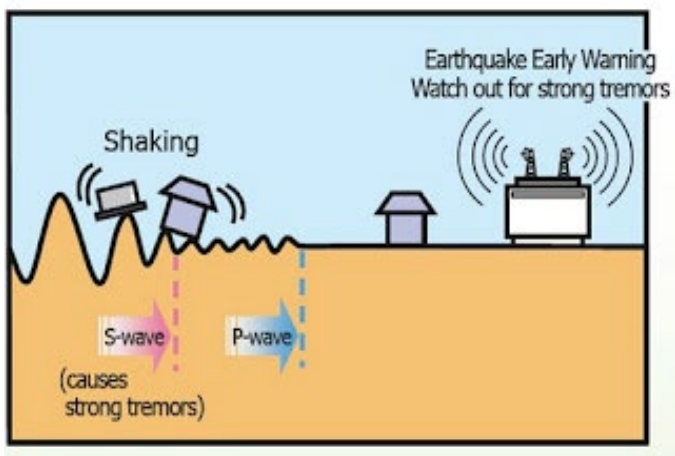
[‘Education’ representative runs to sit under the table.]

The health workers were taught how to work with the other authorities so that people could be rescued and receive medical care as quickly as possible, despite the difficult terrain.



[Project picture: Image 3.]

The government is working on improving the early warning system so that everyone can be ready if another earthquake happens.



[Project Image 4 while 'safety' representative scribbles in a notepad.]

Together, all of these projects are called 'Disaster Risk Reduction'

[Students return to the side of the stage]

Conclusion

In a world where disasters like the Nepal earthquake are becoming more and more frequent, it is important that we, as humans, are going to adapt and learn from our experiences, making us more resilient and safer – just like we have fire drills at school.

Today is Disaster Risk Reduction Day, which means that communities all around the world are joining together to recognise all the advances we have made to make the world safer for people who live in places where natural disasters happen. Let's take a moment to remember everyone who has been affected by a natural disaster, and be grateful for all the new technology that will protect them in the future.

19. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

Peter Weever's illustration of Article 23 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
©Unicef



3 DECEMBER

Article 6

Every child has the right to life. Governments shall ensure to the maximum extent that children survive and develop.

Article 12

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and have their decisions taken into account.

Article 23

Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.

Article 24

All children and young people have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe

environment, and information to help them stay alive, healthy and safe.

Article 42

The Government should make the Convention known to parents and children.

Key words

- Freedom
- Justice
- Care
- Equality
- Learning
- Respect
- Rights
- Responsibility

Resources

- You will need, if possible, to display or project Peter Weever's illustration of Article 23, pictured above: unicef.uk/article23.

Pupil participation

- Six children
- A child should tell the story, which has been

adapted to be a first-person account.

- Five children could read the poem and the statements at the end.

Assembly Content

We often celebrate special days in our assemblies.

[Mention one or two you have celebrated recently.]

Today is another special day. I wonder if you can guess what it is.

[Give the stage over to the child who is the story teller.]

Now, we are going to see a short play.

The story

I was 13 years old when I first heard about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and I wanted to know more. I learnt that children had rights to education, health care, clean water and so many other things that help you grow up to become the best person you can be. I believe that all children should know and understand the rights in the Convention and ever since I learned about them I have tried to make sure that other children know about them too.

It was Article 12 that really excited me. There were so many things that my friends and other young people in my country, Mexico, are bothered about. Up to now, I felt I couldn't do anything about them, but once I understood Article 12, which says "You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously" I began talking to adults about not just my concerns, but those of lots of other young people, and they began to join in with me.

Soon adults began to listen to us and, much to everybody's amazement, important people began to ask our opinions on matters that concerned us. The Mexican Government asked us our views about family life, school, our communities, and what we thought of the country. To find out the opinions of lots of children, it was decided that Mexican children should vote for the opinions that mattered most to them.

The first Children's Consultation of Mexican children was held in Mexico City. More than 4 million Mexican children submitted their opinions. This was the first time that politicians actually wanted to know what children thought in Mexico.

I am often interviewed for television, radio and newspapers and magazines, and this is what I always say:

"Adults really need to listen to young people of all ages, shapes, sizes and colours. We all have different opinions that are relevant to who we are and what we want out of life. The fact that I have cerebral palsy and have to use a wheelchair doesn't make any difference to my needs or my rights – they are the same for every child. My disability is not an obstacle to me; it is part of who I am. I think, in a strange way, that it actually inspires others. They see that I don't consider it a problem and they realise that they can also reach their goals.

"There are thousands of children in Mexico who are exercising their right to give an opinion and using that opinion to bring about change, I am just one of them."

Conclusion

Thank you. So, what was that story about?

[Your pupils will probably think it is about the importance of Article 12 and telling others about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.]

So what do you think today's special day is?

[Take answers. Then show the illustration by Peter Weevers overleaf]

What does this picture have to do with today's story?

[Gradually work toward the fact that 3 December is the International Day of Disabled Persons.]

Why do you think there is a special day for disabled people?

[Pupils may well realise that disabled people have a hard time getting around and receiving the help they need.]

The day is to remind everyone that everyone has all the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Declaration on Human Rights. In addition, disabled people have a right to special care that will enable them to live a full a life as possible.

[You could use the statements below to reinforce the fact that disabled children want to be included but may need extra help so they can take part. Pupils come on stage to read a poem and one of the statements below.]

A poem

**Shaking limbs, no control
Children staring, often pointing
Parents looking away.
Watching the game, no one asks me.
You talk to John but never to me.
I like to play please ask me,
I like to cheer, don't stare at me.
Inside I am like you,
Remember I have feelings too!**

Selwa Ibrahim, age 13

Statement 1 – A wheelchair-using teenager wrote a letter to a newspaper. This is an extract from the letter: "There are no youth clubs where I can enter with my wheelchair. It's the same with most leisure activities."

Statement 2 – Another teenager said to a school visitor: "After school and in the holidays, I just stay at home at night ... it's too difficult to go anywhere ... and finding a friend is difficult."

Statement 3 – A nine-year-old boy told his teacher: "I'd like to play football but the others don't let me play with them. They say I'll hurt myself ... but it's them that are hurting me."

Statement 4 – A 10-year-old girl said: "The owner of the shop thought he was helping me when he let me go first, but I want to be treated like everyone else."

20. HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

All children have the right to free primary education. A girl at Kampong Thmar Primary School, Cambodia. @Unicef/Brown



10 DECEMBER

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, place of birth, religion, politics, disability, and status.

Article 12

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and have their decisions taken into account.

Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and are protected from violence, abuse and neglect by anyone who is caring for them.

Article 28

All children have the right to free primary education. Governments should support

children to achieve the highest level of education they can.

Key words

- Equality
- Justice
- Respect
- Rights
- Responsibilities
- Universal

Resources

- Cinderella storybook
- You may wish to display or project the image shown above of a girl at school in Cambodia: [unicef.uk/hrd](https://www.unicef.uk/hrd).

Pupil participation

- One pupil to read the poem

Assembly Content

[Hold up storybook]

I want to tell you a story that I am sure you have already heard – the story of Cinderella.

But this time I am going to stop at points in the story, and you can tell me what rights we should consider.

Once upon a time there was a happy family: Mum, Dad and their daughter Cinderella. Sadly, mum fell ill and died but Dad and Cinderella continued to live together, keeping each other company and helping each other.

But after some years, Dad decided to marry a widow with two daughters of her own. Cinderella tried to get on with her new stepmother and her two new sisters, but very quickly they started to treat her like a servant. Dad was away a lot and she found it difficult to talk to him.

What rights issues does Cinderella's story raise?

Look for:

1. Right of children to be consulted in issues that concern them (Article 12)
2. Right of children to be cared for by their parents (Article 7)
3. Right of children to be with their parents unless they are badly treated (Article 9)
4. Both parents share responsibility for bringing up and supporting their children (Article 18).

Soon Cinderella found that she didn't have time to go to school anymore, because she was so busy cooking and cleaning for her stepmother and stepsisters. They were treating her more and more cruelly. Cinderella no longer slept in her nice bedroom but on a mattress in the

kitchen. She didn't eat with the family any more, but ate scraps in the kitchen. When Cinderella objected to the way she was being treated, she was locked in a dark, damp cellar for hours.

What rights do you think Cinderella is missing now that she had before?

Look for:

1. Right to go to school (Article 28)
2. Right to a decent standard of living (Article 27)
3. Right to protection from abuse and neglect (Article 9)
4. Right to protection from exploitative work (Article 32)

One day an invitation came for all the women in the house to attend a royal ball where the prince was going to choose a bride. Everyone was very excited, including Cinderella. She was far prettier than her sisters, although she didn't have any fine clothes. But her stepmother and stepsisters told her that she couldn't go to the ball. Instead, Cinderella had to work very hard doing the dresses, hair and make-up for her stepmother and stepsisters. On the night of the ball, Cinderella was left alone to clean the kitchen.

What rights is Cinderella missing now?

Look for:

1. Right to play (Article 31).

Fortunately the story of Cinderella has a happy ending – a magical fairy godmother helps her go to the ball where she meets, and later, marries a prince with who she lives happily ever after. Sadly, in real life there are no magical godmothers to help children who are being denied rights and we can't rely on a fairy tale ending. When children's human rights are being denied it is up to other adults as duty bearers to uphold them. If you are ever denied your rights then you should tell a responsible adult.

I have told this story today because it is Human Rights Day. As a school, we support human rights and children's rights.

Conclusion

Does anyone know the names of the two United Nations documents that state the rights of all children and adults?

Look for:

1. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Why are human rights important?

Why do you think there is an international day to remember Human Rights?

An 11-year-old boy wrote the following poem about the Human Rights Act, which is the law that makes sure we get our human rights:

Pupil stands up and reads the poem aloud

Human Rights

**I am not very old
But I think I understand
How the Human Rights Act
Would work throughout the land.
Freedom within the law
To work and think and pray.
To speak out against injustice
Which many suffer from each day.
I am still a child
But I think I know what's right,
Like standing up for friends
When a bully wants to fight.
We must all work together
To create a better place.
So that all people, everywhere
Can have a living space.
Life is very precious.
We all have much to give.
We must care for one another
And must live and let live.**

Alan Barry (age 11)