

Assembly: Peace and Friendship

The Torch Relay has always been an important part of the cultural festivals surrounding the Olympic games in ancient Greece. It tours the nation to spread a message of peace, unity and friendship.

The world has seen a lot of wars and conflict and wars are still continuing today in different parts of the world. Instead of different countries coming together in war, the Olympics is an opportunity to come together in a positive spirit of peace, unity and friendship. Although it is competitive, it is a friendly competition designed to celebrate the achievements of those taking part.

Who has ever played on a team or been involved in sports competitions? Hopefully that will have been fun and given you the opportunity to make friends and to get that fantastic sense of pride and achievement from doing well or from the team doing well.

These values can bring light to communities, promoting co-operation and warmth rather than hostility or simply ambivalence. Each of us also have the

choice on a day-to-day basis of whether to bring warmth, co-operation and peace or hostility and negative feeling.

Ask for two children to volunteer. Place a chair on your left and one on your right and ask a child to sit in each chair. Ask the child on your right to be the 'happy' button and the volunteer on your left to be the 'sad' button. Decide on an action/noise for each 'button' e.g. the 'happy button' could cheer silently or could shout, 'Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah' whilst punching the air. The 'sad button' could stick their arm out with a thumbs down, frown and stick out their lower lip or shout out 'Boo, boo' or say in a sad voice, 'that makes me sad'. Whatever the noise/action it should be simple so that upon repetition it becomes amusing.

Read out a series of actions or choices that the children could choose to make on a day-to-day basis and ask the rest of the school/audience to decide whether it is something that would make others happy or sad. They could vote, replicate the actions you have chosen for the volunteers at the front, or simply shout out 'happy' or



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'sad'. Whichever option 'wins', the relevant 'button' (happy or sad) should do their action/ make their noise. The effect is greater and more amusing if the volunteers act almost as robots, staying very still and expressionless in between making their actions.

- Helping your parents with the washing up
- Asking someone if they are ok when they have hurt themselves
- Laughing at someone when they do something wrong
- Thanking someone when they do something nice for you
- Taking the last sweet that you know is meant to be for your brother/sister
- Going to bed when your parents ask you to
- Telling a lie

(you may have your own ideas too).

After completing the list, reinforce the fact that all of us can make choices like these on a daily basis, that either have a happy, positive effect on others, or can make others sad or annoyed. Ask the children which they would prefer and try to elicit a co-ordinated 'hurrah' (or repeat of the 'happy' noise/ action) from the whole group.

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Give a final example - giving someone a bar of chocolate - would that be likely to make them happy or sad? What about the farmers that grow the cocoa or sugar? Are they happy or sad? Although it may seem likely that they are happy because someone is buying their chocolate, actually, if it isn't Fairtrade chocolate we don't know whether we are making them happy. If it is not Fairtrade chocolate then they may not have been paid fairly or be able to cover their costs or improve their lives.

Prayer:

Lord God, thank you for those who make us feel happy; those who encourage us and support us. Please help us to be those who bring joy and peace to those around us.

Amen.

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