

# INTRODUCTORY LESSON for the beginning of each new year

**Objective:** To introduce the five values and help the class to understand them and to feel comfortable with the five teaching components

**Key Words:** human values, truth, love, peace, righteousness (doing right), non-violence, universal, rules, responsibility, listening skills, silence, valued, respect, goals, achievement

*This series of 26 lesson plans can be taught over a period of two or three years and can be given in any order. Any single lesson plan can be used more than once and can form a spiritual foundation leading to other topics or current news. This will allow the teacher to use the lesson in the most effective way as part of an integrated curriculum.*

### **Introduction to the course**

Explain that the course is about values which help everyone live more happily and in greater harmony with other people, and to know that they are each someone of value.

### **Setting the ground rules**

An effective way to establish a climate of co-operation and mutual respect in the classroom is to require the pupils to think together about how they will treat each other. At the beginning of the Programme or each school year, small groups can brainstorm the behaviour and strategies most likely to lead to harmony and productive learning. The class can then agree a small number of priorities, which everyone is prepared to observe. The final list should be prominently displayed, or even signed by each individual as a contract. Teachers should insist that agreement is reached by consensus, not majority vote, and that everyone must be happy with the decisions, so that no one 'wins' or 'loses'. Ensure that the ground rules include some version of:

- only one person speaks at a time
- everyone listens respectfully to the current speaker
- no put-downs or name calling
- everyone has a right to silence

A useful starting point might be:

*To make this class a good place in which to live and learn*

*everyone has a right to ...*

*everyone has a responsibility to ...*

Later in the year remind the children of the original ground rules, ensuring that the finger of blame is not pointed at anyone seeming to have failed.

When working together in groups try to ensure that everyone:

- feels valued
- is encouraged to take an active part
- uses humour in ways which do not hurt others.

(Link: 'Our World, Our Rights' - Amnesty International, pp28/29 Rights and Responsibilities in the Classroom, Activity 3.)

## QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK

### Five Values Poem

by Carole Alderman

There are five values that I cannot see  
Five values that are you and me.  
The first is *Truth*, which rings a bell inside,  
The second *Love*, to give, not hide.  
The third is *Peace*, we feel when mind is still.  
The fourth is always *Doing Right*,  
When out of view, as well as within sight.  
Fifth, totalling the other four,  
Is called *Non-violence*, which means being kind  
In what we do, and say, and think in mind.

Discuss the five values and ask the class what they think each value means.

## SILENT SITTING

In the lesson plans, the Silent Sitting exercise is near the beginning before the story, but it can be practised at any time during the lesson, as the teacher feels appropriate and taking the children's age and ability into consideration.

Explain that the course contains an exercise which is very valuable and enjoyable and will help them to learn better and become happier. It is about being very still and listening, particularly listening to the sounds and feelings inside.

Steps 1, 2, (*The Silent Sitting exercise steps are on page 40 of the introduction*)

Step 5: *Play some music quietly for a minute or two. (Flute music, music incorporating the sounds of nature e.g. sounds of water, bird song or the Song of the Whale, are suitable). Then phase the music out so that the children are sitting for a minute or two in silence.*

Step 6.

## STORY TELLING

### SARAH'S STORY

by Rita Melwani

It was the last day of the summer holidays. Sarah's family was busy.

"Don't talk to me now, Sarah," said her big brother, Richard. "I have to get this project finished."

"Don't bother me now, Sarah," said her mother. "It's school tomorrow and I have a lot to get ready."

"I want to go somewhere," Sarah moaned. "I don't want to be on my own."

"Maybe later," said Sarah's Mum. "Why don't you do some writing? Write about the holiday."

Sarah pulled a face. "We'll do that at school tomorrow," she said. She went to her room and looked out at the rain. She watched a raindrop run down the window. She followed it with her finger and thought about the summer holiday. The family had been touring and Sarah had collected a postcard from every place. She sat down and looked at the postcards one by one. What else had she collected? Shaking her duffle bag out on to the bed, out rolled two foreign coins and a seashell. Then she searched through her jacket pockets. She found lots of entrance tickets - to caves and castles. She found a feather and an old sweet wrapper. There was soon a pile of things on her bed which she looked at carefully.

Sarah could hear Richard coughing in the next room and her Mum talking on the telephone downstairs. Sarah started to hum as she got out some big sheets of paper, felt pens and glue. Starting with the postcard of the caves, she glued it onto the paper. Next to it she wrote: 'We visited these caves. They were cold and dark'.

Gluing the entrance ticket near to the picture, she drew round the French coin. 'It cost this much to get in,' she wrote. Pages and pages were soon filled up with her collection. When her Mum came in, Sarah was busy.

"That looks interesting," said Sarah's Mum.

"It's a book about our holiday," Sarah explained.

"I'm ready to take you somewhere now," said her Mum. "Do you want to see some friends?"

Sarah had changed her mind. "I'll see them tomorrow at school," she said smiling. "Today I would like to work on this by myself."

#### QUESTIONS:

1. How did Sarah feel at the beginning of the story?
2. What happened to change her mood?
3. How did you feel when you heard the story?
4. Does it remind you of anything in your own life?

## GROUP SINGING

### WHERE?

*(music and lyrics by Carole Alderman)*

Where is truth, truth so true?  
In God, and the universe, and you.

Where is peace, peace so true?  
In God, and the universe, and you.

Where is love, love so true?  
In God, and the universe, and you.

*(Repeat x 2)*

## GROUP ACTIVITY

### ***One thing we have in common ...***

Clear an open space. Give the class five minutes for each member to introduce themselves to two or three other pupils and to find out their names and write down one thing they have in common with each of them. The common factor might be, for example, something they enjoy doing or something they have which is the same: colour of eyes, a birthday in the same month, keeping the same kind of pet, or that they like swimming. At the end of five minutes, ask a few volunteers to name whom they chose and to say what they have in common.

### ***Together we can ...***

Ask the young people to form pairs, then join up with another pair they don't know well. Give each group a few minutes to create a mime of:

- a statue of a tree, or
- a representation of a moving aeroplane, or
- a photograph of a picnic.

*(Ensure everyone is included and has a chance to act out the mime.)*

**Extension exercise/Links to Other Subjects:** Give each child a copy of the page of the five values and their symbols to colour in and write the meaning against each one. At the end of this first lesson, the teacher may like to explain to the children that future lessons will also include a story as well as the things they have done today i.e. a Theme for the Week, a Song, Silent Sitting and an Activity.

If the teacher wishes they may get into a circle, or into pairs, and say one thing they are looking forward to in these lessons in the future.