

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: *attribute, criticise, gleeful, mote, symbol, telepathic*

This series of 26 lesson plans can be taught 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 and copies given to pupils, 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:

- accepting others' personal attributes - no negative criticism
- no put-downs or name calling
- only one person speaks at a time
- everyone listens respectfully to the current speaker
- everyone has a right to silence

A useful starting point might be:

<i>To make this class a good place in which to live and learn</i>	
<i>everyone has a right to ...</i>	<i>everyone has a responsibility to ...</i>

Later in the year remind the pupils 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
- gives positive praise and encouragement to others
- gives feedback

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

The Five Values and Related Values Game

Put up a chart showing which values relate to the five main values (*for lists see pages 28 and 29*).

Students sit in a circle facing outwards.

Give them each the name of one of the five values:

Truth - Love - Peace - Right conduct - Non-violence.

The leader calls out the name of one value and everyone with that name runs round the circle and back to his/her place. The last one back leaves the circle to sit next to the leader and tells the others the name of one value related to his own. e.g. Truth = fearlessness, Love = sharing, Peace = contentment, etc.

If any runner touches another, they will be deemed the last person and sit out. As the game progresses, more than one value can be called at a time.

QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK

If I point a finger at someone,
Three fingers point back at me.

Discuss the meaning of this quotation. Can you think of a similar quotation?

SILENT SITTING

In the lesson plans, the Silent Sitting exercise is near the beginning before the narrative, but it can be practised at any time during the lesson, as the teacher feels appropriate and taking the pupils 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 36*)

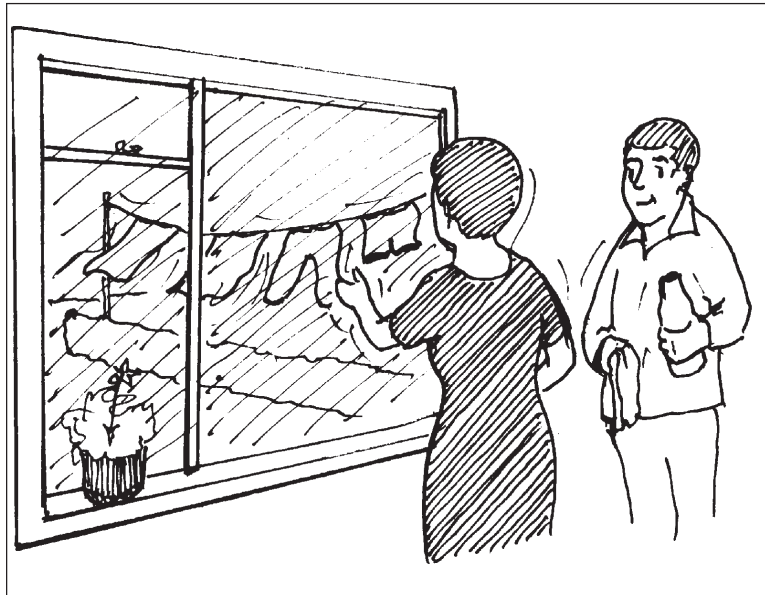
Step 5: *Play some music quietly for a minute or two. (Flute music, music incorporating the sounds of nature e.g. sounds of water, bird song or the Silent Sitting music on the SSEHV CD1). Then phase the music out so that the children are sitting for a minute or two in silence.*

Step 6.

NARRATIVE

THE DIRTY WASHING

A young couple had just moved into a new flat. Every morning before breakfast the wife used to do her aerobic exercises. She came down to the living room and began her routine in front of the window when she noticed that her neighbour had hung her washing in the garden and that the washing looked grey.



“They really ought to change their washing powder,” she said somewhat gleefully to her husband. “My washing is always white and spotless.”

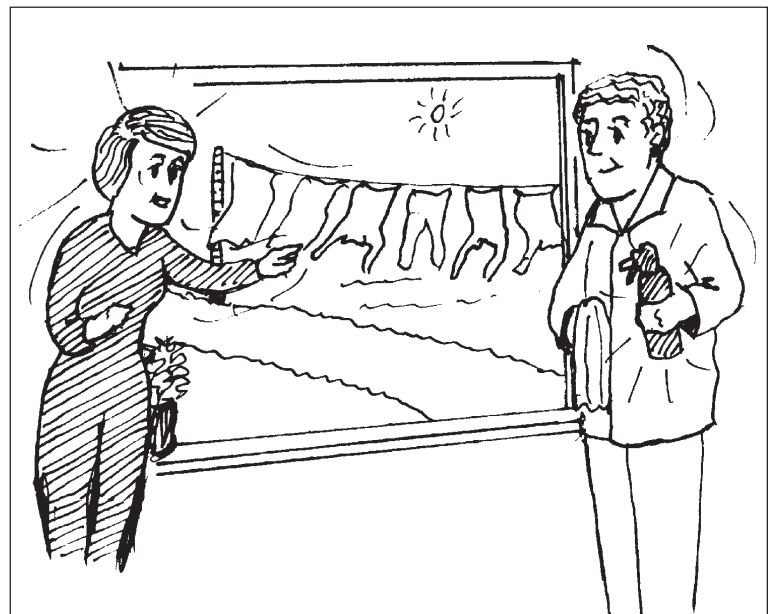
The next morning whilst exercising in front of the window, she again noticed the neighbour’s washing. Again it looked grey and dirty. At breakfast she again told her husband. “They really ought to change their washing powder, or perhaps they need a new washing machine.”

For several mornings on coming down to do her daily exercises before breakfast, she would glance out at her neighbour’s washing. It was always grey and she continued to comment about it to her husband.

One morning she came down, and could not believe her eyes! The washing blowing in the next garden was brilliant white.

“Look,” she called to her husband excitedly. “The woman next door must be telepathic. She has obviously changed her washing powder.”

“Not at all,” responded her husband. “It was just that I was so fed up with hearing you criticising the neighbour’s dirty washing that I got up extra early this morning ... **AND CLEANED OUR WINDOWS!**”



QUESTIONS: *Support answers to questions 1 to 3 with evidence from the text.*

1. What did the wife think when she saw the neighbour's washing?
2. Why was she gleeful?
3. What happened to change her understanding of the situation?
4. What is this story trying to teach us?
5. What did Jesus mean when he said, "Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own eye?" (*Matthew 7:3 Jerusalem Bible*)
6. How did you feel when you heard the story?
7. 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

1. ***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. At the end of five minutes, ask a few volunteers to name whom they chose and to say what they have in common.

2. Write a short story entitled 'The boy/girl who learnt to change himself/herself instead of criticising others'.

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.

Extension exercise: Give each pupil a copy of the page of the five values and their symbols. Ask them to pick 5 values and write against each one what the world would be like if everyone exhibited that value.