

Activities for Children & Young People



For Children

1. Activity - Feeling left out

This poem was written by a ten-year-old girl. Read it through and then think of five reasons why you have sometimes felt left out and five reasons you have felt included. On a separate sheet of paper, write them down as in the poem below. You could also draw pictures to go with them.

Feeling left out

I felt excluded because of my colour
I felt excluded because I was new to school
I felt excluded because I wear glasses
I felt excluded because the children called me nasty names
I felt excluded because of the way I dress
I felt excluded because of the way I talk and my accent
I felt included because I had become their friend
I felt included because my friends did not tease me because I wear glasses
I felt included because my friend did not say anything nasty about my colour
I felt included because the children did not pick on me and call me nasty names
I felt included because they knew me.

Where it really matters (Epstein and Sealey, 1990), Refugee Council.

2. Activity - Researching multi-ethnic Britain - a fight to belong

Use a map of your local area and a map of Preston as a case study. This activity links friendship with the concept of living in diverse communities and helps to foster an interest in such diversity. The following information looks at Britain as a multi-ethnic community, using the example of Preston as a case study. An extension of this work involves examining the 2001 Census to find out about ethnic groups in your local neighbourhood. These activities encourage children to regard themselves as citizens of a wider community

which includes people from all over the world - from our Global Communities. This work will also contribute towards developing a positive attitude towards all migrants.

Case Study of Preston

The Lancashire town of Preston, roughly in the middle of the United Kingdom, is at a crossroads between north and south, east and west. Preston is an example of a British town which has attracted people from many different countries over the centuries. Settlers there include people from Scotland, Ireland, Scandinavia, Poland, the Ukraine, Africa (especially Uganda), the Caribbean, South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), China and Jewish people. They have all brought their own cultural traditions with them, enriching the life of the town. For instance, Preston has a Caribbean carnival each year which is the second biggest in the UK. People came to Preston mainly to look for work, or to escape persecution or famine in their own country. 'I heard this programme on the radio the other day and it was about national cuisine. Apparently the most national dish in Britain was chicken madras. That tells you a lot really.'

Questions

- ❖ What does the group think about the example of Preston? Is it different or similar to your local area?
- ❖ Children could find out what different countries people have come from to their own area in the past, and why they came.
- ❖ They could mark these countries on a world map with the dates of their emigration.
- ❖ As an extension, they could research more details about one or more of the countries of origin of the people in the area.

Quoted in Moving Stories: A History of Settlement in Preston, Refugee Council



Food is one way we can find out where local people in our area come from:

- ❖ Children can note down how many different restaurants there are in their area, e.g. Italian, Indian, Chinese, Turkish etc.
- ❖ They can also find out what specialist food shops or supermarket food counters there are in the area, e.g. Japanese, Greek, Jewish etc.
- ❖ Ask a local restaurant owner to come and speak to the class about the origins of his food and why he has opened a restaurant locally.

Most countries that used to be part of the British Empire are now independent but remain part of the **Commonwealth** which now has 54 members. Children can find out more about the Commonwealth and its members. Can they name most of the former British colonies for example Ghana, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Nigeria, Dominica, Malaysia, Kenya, India, Uganda, Jamaica, South Africa, Singapore and Zambia etc? They can investigate how the UK or the local area has been influenced by countries that were formerly colonies. Or, as a contrast, children may wish to find out how countries which were British colonies have been

influenced by Britain, for example through the language, education, religion, institutions etc.

Food for thought

You may wish to use some of the following points during a follow-up discussion:

- ❖ People from the Caribbean helped to rebuild our cities after the war
- ❖ Many doctors and nurses in this country originally came from abroad
- ❖ There were four black players in England's 1998 World Cup football squad
- ❖ Many different foods and products that we take for granted originate from other parts of the world. For example, potatoes and tomatoes originally from South America, tea comes from India, glass was invented in Egypt, paper was invented in China, and even fish and chips were brought to the UK in the 17th century by Jewish refugees.



For Young People - challenging stereotypes of refugees

1. Activity - myths and facts

Ask small groups to think of myths/stories they were told when younger, e.g. the tooth fairy, the stork brought you, I've got eyes in the back of my head, if you tell a lie your nose will grow etc. (They may think of fairy tales and legends too).

Discussion questions

Why do you think you were told the story? To make you feel happy/scared? To make you

do/not do something? Because the person telling you believed it themselves? Or felt embarrassed? Or didn't want you to know something? Why do young children believe the myths they are told? Can you think of any myths that adults believe? In what ways can myths be beneficial? Can they be harmful?

Myths and facts about young people

Ask young people to think of examples of how young people are stereotyped. Recent examples include the 2005 election campaigning on 'job culture' and the banning of 'hoodies' in large shopping centres. What do they feel about this?

Discussion questions on refugees

- ❖ What image is given of 'refugees'?
- ❖ How can you decide what is myth and what is fact?
- ❖ Why do some people stereotype refugees negatively?
- ❖ Do you think newspaper headlines influence their readers' attitudes to refugees?
- ❖ What other groups are sometimes stereotyped and treated unfairly?
- ❖ What makes some groups powerful and others powerless?
- ❖ Can belonging to a group be dangerous to those 'inside' or 'outside' the group?

2. Activity - newspaper myths and facts

Consider these claims in the newspapers about sanctuary/asylum seekers. How do we know if they are based on myth or fact?

‘so-called asylum-seekers who in reality seek no more than access to our welfare system’

Leader comment, *Sunday Express*, 2 May 2004

‘Asylum crime fear’

News of the World, 30 January 2005

‘One in five flock here; asylum: we’re too damn soft’

Daily Star, January 2004

Myths

Most sanctuary/asylum-seekers come from countries where they are safe

Some sanctuary/asylum-seekers repay our generosity by thieving in town and city centres

Sanctuary/Asylum-seekers take our housing

Sanctuary/Asylum-seekers are here illegally

The influx of refugees is threatening to swamp the UK

Sanctuary/Asylum-seekers get huge state handouts

3. Activity - distinguishing myths and facts about refugees

Below each myth is linked to a fact and you have to work out which is related to the other

Facts

Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, people have the right to apply for asylum – the UK is obliged to examine their case

Between 2000 and 2002, the UK received 1.9 asylum applications per 1,100 inhabitants

Sanctuary/Asylum-seekers are not usually allowed to claim benefits. If supported, a single adult has to survive on £38.96 a week

Sanctuary/Asylum-seekers have no right to permanent housing. They are usually housed in temporary, sub-standard accommodation

Most Sanctuary/Asylum-seekers coming to the UK are fleeing countries where there is war and human rights abuses

Sanctuary/Asylum-seekers commit no more crime than anyone else does though violence and crime is often directed at them