THE GREAT GET TOGETHER: PRIMARY SCHOOL ACTIVITY PACK

#greatgettogether #moreincommon
The activities in the Great Get Together activity pack are designed for primary schools to commemorate and celebrate Jo Cox MP, using her life and work to help children and young people develop their understanding of identity, diversity, community and equality.

Feel free to pick and mix activity suggestions in a way that allows you to use what is most suitable for your own communities, learners and ages.
Assemblage suggestions

1. Opening slide: “We have more in common than that which divides us.”

Reflection question: What does this mean? Do you agree?

2. Telling Jo’s story:

Key points about Jo’s life and work:

- Jo always dreamed of being a Member of Parliament in her hometown.

- She grew up in Yorkshire and was very academic and sporty – she once won every race at a swimming gala.

- After finishing school, Jo went to Cambridge University. She found it difficult and didn’t feel like she fitted in because she sounded different to everyone else. However she persevered and in the end made some great friends and learnt a lot about politics and the world we live in.

- After university, Jo travelled and worked in some of the world’s most dangerous war zones, campaigning to make the world a fairer place.

- During Jo’s career working at Oxfam she met her husband Brendan. They both shared a love of travelling and spent many trips volunteering across the world including in an orphanage in Bosnia.

- In 2015 on a car journey with Brendan, Jo made the decision to become an MP. The decision wasn’t easy to make and she deliberated long and hard about whether she could be a good mother as well as a good MP.

- In 2015, Jo was elected as the MP for Batley & Spen in Yorkshire. She went back to work there and loved having the connection with her hometown.

- Jo worked extremely hard but always put her kids first – she even voted in the Chamber in the House of Commons wearing her cycling gear so she could get home in time to put the kids to bed.

- In her short time as an MP, Jo achieved so much and was loved across all parties in the Houses of Parliament.

3. Reflection question: Turn to the person next to you and find three things you have in common.

4. Great Get Together: Introduce The Great Get Together and the ideas behind it

- On Friday 16th June it will be one year since Jo died. Jo was killed because of her beliefs. Jo believed everyone has the right to their own beliefs and opinions but that we all have the responsibility to respect those of other people. The person that killed Jo was put on trial and found guilty and is now in prison. Jo’s friends and family wanted to remember her by getting people together because bringing people together is something that mattered to Jo.

- Get Togethers of all different shapes and sizes are being organised, from street parties to bake-offs, football matches to village fairs and rowing races to picnics – hopefully you can be a part of the fun!

- The message behind The Great Get Together is a simple one: that we all have more in common than that which divides us.

- Brendan, Jo’s husband, said Jo would have been thrilled by the idea of The Great Get Together because it’s a chance to bring our communities together and celebrate what unites us. He said there could be no more fitting tribute to Jo’s memory than The Great Get Together.

5. Video: To promote Great Get Together

6. Reflection question: What will you tell someone at home about the Great Get Together? What can we do in our school or community to enjoy getting together with lots of different people?

Adaptations for primary school

- Use a picture book with younger children which celebrates diversity, or illustrates a friendship between characters who appear to be very different. Letterbox, Library, Booktrust and Inclusive Minds all have suggested book lists which you may find useful.

- Include a song with a message about diversity and friendship (e.g. Lean on Me/Ain’t No Mountain High Enough).

- Incorporate participation by having members of the school or local community speak in the assembly about some similarities and differences they share (e.g. the head teacher and one of the lunchtime supervisors; members of two different faith communities).
**Classroom activities**

• Reflection questions could be pre-discussed by one class and ideas presented to the assembly.

Below is a range of activities that could be used with pupils in the classroom to reinforce and revisit messages delivered in the assembly. These may be suitable for use as part of topic time, in PSHE or Citizenship lessons or during tutor time. The activities include suggested timings, but these are flexible.

**Changing places game (10-15mins):**

Participants form a circle, and swap places based on aspects of their identity. The teacher reads various instructions:

- “Change places if you... have/are/like...”
- “Change places if you have a brother.”
- “Change places if you like football.”
- “Change places if you like fruit.”
- “Change places if you cycle to school.”
- “Change places if you like snowy days.” etc.

Teachers should aim to make sure everyone crosses the circle at some point and that they keep changing the type of question, whilst ensuring that no one is put ‘on the spot’ or encouraged to make an overly personal disclosure. The teacher can comment as the game progresses about the ways in which we all have things in common and things that are individual about us.

**Changing places follow up questions (5-10mins):**

After playing the changing places game, ask children and young people to reflect on questions such as the following:

- What did most/lots of/not many people change places for? Why do you think this was? What does this mean about us in this class?

- Were you surprised that not many of us liked/changed places for...? Why do you think this was?

- From this game, which thing do most of us have in common?

**Invisible similarities and differences (15mins):**

Explain that we all have similarities and differences, but that some of these can only be discovered by talking to and getting to know one another by asking questions. Examples of invisible similarities and differences might be hobbies, food, favourite subjects at school, favourite films, where you were born, how old you are.

Working in pairs, children interview each other to find three invisible similarities, and three invisible differences between them. They could do this in several different pairs if appropriate. Finally, bring the class together, and ask for volunteer pairs or groups to share the similarities and differences they have found.

Possible adaptations (additional support):

- You may need to spend some time explaining examples of visible and invisible similarities and differences.

- You could model the game with another adult (or through the assembly) in advance of playing it with the class.

- The class may need to start with a round that looks at visible similarities and differences.

Possible adaptations (additional challenge):

- After working in pairs, ask children to get into increasingly larger groups (e.g. of 4, 6 or 8) and try to find two similarities between all of them.

- Class link: arrange 20-min class swaps throughout the day where different classes visit one another and play invisible similarities having practised in their own group e.g. Y6 visit Y4, Y2 visit Reception etc.

- School link: if feasible, organise a visit with a class in another school and play the invisible similarities and differences game with a wider community.

**Invisible similarities and difference follow up questions (10mins):**

- Did you find out anything that surprised you about your partner, or anyone else in the class?

- Did you find something in common with someone else that you didn’t know about?

- What sorts of things do we have in common with each other?

- What is important about us?
**Classroom activities**

- What would life be like if everyone was the same?
- What is the best way to find out about other people if we don’t know them very well?

**Creative activities (30-45mins):**

After the assembly and playing the invisible similarities and differences game, ask children to make #moreincommon posters illustrating the things they found in common in their pairs or groups. Photograph pairs holding their poster.

Posters could be used on a ‘Community Wall’ or ‘More in Common Wall’ displayed in school. They could also be used to create bunting to decorate the school’s Great Get Together event if they are holding one (alternatively children could create bunting from red gingham, which is the Great Get Together logo).

NB: Schools will be invited to upload photographs to Twitter using the hashtag #moreincommon or #greatgettogether if they wish to.

**Planning a Great Get Together (20-30mins):**

If a school is planning to hold a Great Get Together, you could involve children in the planning. Some of the questions for consideration could be:

- What kind of event should it be?
- Who shall we invite?
- What do we need for the event?
- How and to whom will we advertise it?
- Where will the event be?
- How can we make it a celebration?

Children could also contribute food such as cakes etc, and be involved in the serving if appropriate. Schools might consider a class swap across their school for children of different ages.