



The Royal British Legion

School assembly outline - using the postcards for veterans

Lesson for Key stages one and two.



Aim: To create a lesson about Remembrance to help young people to recognise that Remembrance is for all those who fought and are affected by conflict not just for those who are killed.

Resources: Letter sent to schools regarding “Postcards for Veterans”
The Royal British Legion Schools’ Pack
NB any additional pictures of conflict can be used from the CD Rom or Schools’ Pack to illustrate this lesson.

Start

- Show pupils a poppy or a picture of the poppy from the CD Rom or The Royal British Legion website (www.britishlegion.org.uk).
- Ask the pupils “Do they know what the poppy stands for?”
- Ask “Do they wear a poppy?”

Explain

The poppy is a very special symbol that reminds us of something very particular – it is the symbol of Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day is the day for us to remember all the people who have fought, been killed, have been injured or had their lives affected by war.

Ask “Do they know what war is?” Can they give examples?

If war is about fighting – why do they think a poppy is used as a symbol? Explain that it is not about the colour but that it is a symbol of hope.

Ask “Do you know why the poppy was chosen?” Ask the pupils to read the poem below.

In Flanders’ Fields - by John McCrae

In Flanders’ fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw the sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders’ fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders’ fields.

That poem was written after the First World War. In the fields where the war was fought the only thing that would grow was the poppy. The red petals reminded people of the awful suffering that had happened but the poppy as a flower also reminded people of the importance of life.

The poem was written by a Canadian doctor John McCrae who had been in the First World War and saw the poppies growing. The poppy inspired people who believed that those who had fought should not be forgotten and they started to wear a poppy at the time of the anniversary of the end of the war. Now it is worn every year – but there is another side to the poppy.

Explain that the making of the poppy would give jobs to those injured in war and that the selling of the poppy would raise money for people who had fought and been injured, and their families.

The organisation set up to make sure that we remember all those affected by wars and wear the poppy and that raises money to help people is The Royal British Legion.

Activities 1

Key Stage One

Ask the pupils to draw their own poppy

Key Stage One and Two

In pairs, ask pupils to write a poem about Remembrance

What do they think are important words to use when telling people about Remembrance and people affected by wars?

Ask pupils "Do you think that people who are affected by wars live in the UK now?"

Activities 2

Depending on the age groups either read the case studies in the letter and on The Royal British Legion website or, working in groups, ask the pupils to read the case studies.

Do they think these people should be remembered?

Explain that there are some postcards that they can send to these people and Service men and women who are injured in wars today.

Activities 3

In groups, ask the pupils to write down either a poem or a message that they would like to send some one who is:

- a veteran in a care home – such as Ted
- a veteran in hospital – that might be someone who has been recently injured while fighting overseas
- a veteran in his or her own home – such as John
- A family that has suffered as a result of a Service man or women being injured or killed – such as Claire's family.

Send the postcards to the free post address on them or place in an envelope with a stamp and post to:

The Royal British Legion
Unit 14, Willow Lane Business Park
1 - 11 Willow Lane
Mitcham
Surrey CR4 4NA

Extension work

Ask pupils to use the case studies to prepare a Remembrance service for November – they can also use some of the assemblies and Remembrance services on the CD Rom and on the website.

Ask the pupils to mark a map with all the places that wars and conflict are happening around the world today.

Case Studies

Ted's Story



Ted joined the British Army in June 1941, firstly with the Royal Artillery and later The Queen's Royal Regiment. Ted was based in the Quartermaster's store – his job was to supply the troops with food rations and make them stretch as far as possible. During the Second World War his Regiment was posted to Italy to fight. Many of his friends were killed and even today he is still devastated by the number of lives lost. Ted is now 95 and a resident in one of the Legion's care homes where he is frequently found in the gardens or the garden-room learning about plants.

"I love it here in this home, it's been a Godsend to me. If there's a trip organised, I am on it!" For Ted, Remembrance is a very personal thing. "People don't realize that my friends sacrificed their lives for you and me to be free, right here, right now."

John's story

In 2008, 78-year-old John was declared homeless. A proud man who served in the Army for 19 years, John was sleeping in a hostel when the Legion stepped in to help him find a proper home and furnish it. Even with the Legion's help, John still has to survive on less than £40 a week after he has paid his basic bills – he shops in charity shops to save money and only goes to the supermarket at the end of the day to buy reduced-cost items.

"I find it degrading but I am in no position to be proud. I just want some dignity in my life. I like to take care of myself and look smart but it's very difficult when I turn off the heating most of the time and limit my use of hot water to save money." The Royal British Legion is campaigning to help people like John.



Claire's story

Claire is a full-time carer for her husband Troy. Troy's knees were seriously damaged when serving with the Army – he has no cartilage in either knee and uses a wheelchair. Troy was also a keen boxer, in fact he was regimental boxing champion, but he was injured in a fight and now suffers from headaches, dizziness and memory loss. The Legion helped Troy, Claire and their two children find a bungalow, as well as adapting their new home to suit Troy's needs. Due to the nature of Troy's disabilities, the pressures on the family have been enormous, so the Legion also sent the family on holiday to give them a rest and spend some quality time together.

"My husband Troy served for almost seven years in the Armed Forces and was, unfortunately, discharged with various injuries and is now registered as disabled. Despite this he still works very hard in a full-time job and does as much as he can for his family. We have two children, Sophie 6, and Todd 16, who is my stepson and Troy's son.

"We have a very happy family but of course sometimes things can be difficult. Often Troy is very unwell and we all help as much as we can with day-to-day things. As well as Sophie's mum, Todd's step mum and Troy's wife, I am also registered as Troy's carer, which means I help him with all kinds of different things every day which can be anything from making sure he takes the right medicine, to helping him dress or get around.

The most important thing in our family is that we all work together, and although sometimes things can be difficult, we all know that we can rely on each other, and that makes it work. Most of all, we are all very proud of Troy."