

**UN International Day for Tolerance in UK Primary Schools,**

**Wednesday 16th November 2016**

**Background Information**

**What is the ToDay project?**

The Tolerance ToDay project is a free practical ‘open-source’ educational initiative being run in 60 UK Primary Schools, focused around the UN International Day for Tolerance, 16th November.

Age appropriate lesson plans are available free, covering all Keystages in core curriculum subjects. They include lessons in Maths that uses statistics to explore diversity within a school, in English using creative writing to imagine other people’s lives, and in PSHE and drama to understand anger and resist retaliation. There is also a Tolerance Day assembly, a debate, stories from ambassadors, and some fun activities for the day, including a tolerance paperchain and a sing along.

**Why are you doing it?**

We were shocked by the ramifications of the Brexit campaign. Through our work in schools, running religious tolerance workshops, we saw first-hand how the anti-immigration sentiments affected young children. Eg. a mixed race 5-year-old asking if her and her Daddy were going to be deported; a 10 year olds third generation Indian child being shouted at on the street to go home; leafleting against the Polish families near a school

We also saw wonderful schools that lived and thrived as multicultural communities, and wanted to see this expanded and formalised within day to day teaching.

**What’s the history behind the UN International Day for Tolerance?**

Tolerance Day was first marked by the UN International Year for Tolerance in 1995, in the wake of the racial and cultural conflicts in Africa, the [Balkans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans), and the [Caucasus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasus), which led to the [Rwandan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwandan_genocide) and [Bosnian genocides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnian_genocide) –As they said then, in “the interests of conflict prevention, promotion of human rights,” we need to “ encourage the values of tolerance and peace among all the people of the world.”

In the spirit of continuity, we have tracked down Mark Semotiuk, who when he was 12 years old, appeared at the UN at the launch of the International Day for Tolerance in 1995. His ‘401 Goofy Jokes for Kids’, was used as a symbol of multiculturalism and tolerance, and he is now a Tolerance Ambassador for us in 2016 (for the full story see below).

**What do you mean by Tolerance?**

We have been challenged by the use of the word ‘tolerance’. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “I do not like the word tolerance, but could not think of a better one.”

Our working definition is, that “tolerance is giving to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself.” (Robert Green Ingersoll). It’s not an easy concept, but it is important so we want children to think and talk about it.

We are not advocating tolerance as passive acceptance of things that are clearly indefensible, which are usually already covered within our legal framework.

**Who is behind this initiative?**

The Learn2Think Foundation, which was originally set up in March 2015 to extend and expand the work started by Rapscallion Press. It is bringing together as many people and organisations as possible, including experts in psychology, philosophy, education and the creative arts.

**Partners**

The Citizenship Foundation, Rapscallion Press, What on Earth Publishing, Go Henry, The Week Junior

* **Advisory board**

Angela Hobbs, Professor of the Public Understanding of Philosophy, the University of Sheffield

Lizzie Lewis, Secretary of the International Centre for Philosophical Enquiry

Kiki Mastroyannopoulou consultant clinical psychologist Norwich University Hospital

Lisa Silverman, Head of Learning Support at Mill Hill School

**Tolerance Ambassadors, 2016**

**Mark Sentiuk**

“I grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. As a second generation Ukrainian-Canadian I attended a Ukrainian-bilingual elementary school. After a presentation by Junior Achievement, my class was challenged by our teacher do something entrepreneurial. I wanted to help build bridges between Canada (where I lived), the United States  (where my extended family lived) and Ukraine (where my ancestors lived). I decided to write a joke book by collecting jokes from children in Ukraine and translating them into English.

“I wrote to a Ukrainian newspaper asking kids to write me letters with their best jokes in exchange for a dollar. I ended up receiving hundreds of responses with some great jokes and moving stories. After translating the jokes into English, I self-published “401 Goofy Jokes for Kids.” The book ended up becoming a Canadian bestseller. The profits were donated to Junior Achievement, the Children of Chernobyl and the Ukrainian-Bilingual school system.

My story garnered some attention and I was invited to give a press-conference at the United Nations, supported by the American, Canadian and Ukrainian consulates. At the press-conference, my book was promoted as a symbol of the Year of Tolerance. I hope that 21 years later the message lives on!”

**Catie Munnings**

Catie Munnings, 18, from Kent became the 2016 FIA Ladies European Rally Champion in her inaugural season in the sport – the first British driver to win a European Rally title in 49 years! The FIA European Racing Championship is Europe’s premier rally competition and the oldest international rally series in the world.

Catie only started racing at the end of 2015. She passed her ‘A’ Levels this summer with an A\*, an A and a B. However, she decided to make rally driving her true vocation and long-term future.

Commenting on the win, Catie says, “This year was really only supposed to be about gaining experience and in a way was my real introduction to competitive racing. This has been a fantastic year and we have achieved more than we ever dreamt of. I hope this achievement will inspire other young people.”

She looks set to continue her success in 2017 when she hopes to gain more experience by racing on different surfaces against her male counterparts at the top of her profession – competing and winning with both men and women alike.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT CATIE:

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