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[www.toleranceday.org](http://www.toleranceday.org); [learn2think.org.uk](http://www.learn2think.org.uk/)

**Thousands of primary children will receive lessons in tolerance in a bid to combat anti-immigration sentiments unleashed by the Brexit vote**

More than 60 schools across the country have signed up to a new grass roots project to coincide with the UN International Day for Tolerance on November 16.

Lessons throughout the school day will concentrate on teaching pupils to understand each other’s differences, to think for themselves, and to discuss and debate when they don’t agree - from special morning assemblies, through to measuring diversity in Maths, to imagining other people's lives in English.

Lesson plans from The Tolerance ToDay project, a free practical ‘open-source’ educational initiative, also cover PSHE and drama resources to help children understand anger and to resist retaliation, as well as fun activities, such as a tolerance paperchain and sing along, and inspiring stories from ambassadors.

The three people who run the Learn2Think Foundation- Felicia Jackson, Rhian Sellier and Virginia McLean - said: "We were shocked by the ramifications of the Brexit campaign. Through running religious tolerance workshops in schools, we saw first-hand how the anti-immigration sentiments affected young children. There was a dual heritage child asking if her and her daddy were going to be deported.

"In another instance, a 10-year-old third generation Indian child was shouted at on the street to go home and of course there was the leafleting against the Polish families near a school."

On a more positive note, they also saw examples of schools that lived and thrived as multicultural communities. In June, we decided we had to act." We wanted to see this expanded and formalised within day to day teaching," said the team.

“We are running a whole day on tolerance based on your materials,” Hadassah Meyerowitz

PSHE co-ordinator at Brentfield Primary School, North London, says. “Our day will start with an assembly and end with another assembly where each class will write a class pledge linked to tolerance. The pledges will then be displayed in the school and the classrooms.”

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, and the Caucasus, which led to the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides. 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.”

Mark Semotiuk (see below) featured at the UN at the launch of the International Day for Tolerance in 1995 when he was just 12 years old. His ‘401 Goofy Jokes for Kids’, was used as a symbol of multiculturalism and tolerance, and he is now a Tolerance Ambassador for The Tolerance ToDay project.

The project is being run by the Learn2Think Foundation, which was set up in March 2015 to extend and expand the work started by independent publisher Rapscallion Press, whose books encourage children to think independently, creatively and compassionately. It is bringing together as many people and organisations as possible, including experts in psychology, philosophy, education and the creative arts.

To access the free Tolerance ToDay project lesson plans and resources go to www.toleranceday.org.

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**Notes to editors:**

**How do you teach tolerance?**

At the Learn2Think Foundation we believe that the practice of tolerance can be meaningfully and easily introduced and emphasised across the curriculum.

Our resources:

* Create a positive atmosphere so pupils are ready for discussion
* Explore tolerance - the impact of intolerance, how does that feel, what issues does intolerance cause both personally, in school and in the wider world
* Build confidence and resilience; help pupils understand anger and how to handle it
* Highlight identity, rights and freedoms – understanding yourself; exploring difference and diversity; understanding political frameworks such as the Magna Carta
* Promote story-writing; understanding the power of writing to build empathy and change perspectives
* Encourage taking action – the importance of taking meaningful action that brings people together, heals divides, rights wrongs and promotes harmony.

**Why teach tolerance?**

To move forward and best live and work together, we must be prepared to have our own perspectives changed or shaped, learn to agree to disagree, and to stand up for what is right in the interests of shared humanity.

**Tolerance Ambassadors, 2016**

Mark Semotiuk

“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.