

# THE GREAT GET TOGETHER

INSPIRED BY JO COX

## THE GREAT GET TOGETHER: SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITY PACK

#greatgettogether #moreincommon



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## Introduction

The activities in this Great Get Together activity pack are designed for secondary 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, ages and attainment levels.

Learning about the life and work of Jo Cox may lead to discussions on sensitive issues, such as discrimination or extremism, and some pupils may voice potentially discriminatory or extremist views. Teachers should be clear about the age appropriateness of these discussions and feel confident discussing such topics. The resources are intended to celebrate difference and promote community cohesion and to emphasise the positives of living in a diverse society, and teachers should make clear that such views are never acceptable.

## Assembly

### 1. Opening slide: "We have more in common than that which divides us."

Reflection question: What does this mean?

### 2. Telling Jo's story

Key points about Jo's life and work:

- Jo always dreamed of being an MP in her home constituency.
- At school, Jo worked very hard and her favourite subject was Geography. Jo's Geography teacher was the son of Bernard Kenny, the man who tried to ward off Jo's murderer.
- In Jo's last year at school, Jo took on the Headteacher (her first campaign!) making the case for cancelling lessons ahead of exams and replacing them with home study time.
- Jo was really sporty – she loved swimming, tennis and running and she once won all the medals at a swimming gala.
- Jo loved dancing and singing. She performed routines to dances at school and took part in a production of Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat.
- When Jo was 15, she went to London on a school trip and this was the first time she visited No. 10 Downing Street.
- Jo was quite shy and focused on working hard, and made the decision herself to go to Cambridge University to study Politics.
- Jo found it difficult and didn't feel like she fitted in because she felt her accent made her sound different to everyone else. However, she persevered and in the end made some great friends and, of course, learnt a lot about politics and the global political situation.
- After university, Jo travelled and worked in some of the world's most dangerous war zones, campaigning to make the world a fairer and more equitable place.
- During Jo's career working at Oxfam she found a love of travelling and spent many trips volunteering across the world including in an orphanage in Bosnia.
- In 2015 on a car journey, 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.

• Jo cared about a whole range of issues and spoke out about them in parliament – from loneliness to civilians in conflict zones and women in politics to the NHS

### 3. Reflection question: What strikes you about Jo's life and the causes she cared about? Which causes matter most to you?

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

- 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.
- The weekend of the 22nd-24th June marks Jo's 44th birthday and is around the second anniversary of Jo's death. Jo's friends and family didn't want a to mark her birthday and anniversary with a sombre occasion. So, the plan is to hold celebrations to unite communities across the country.
- Get Togethers of all different shapes and sizes were organised last year and are being organised again, 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 taken from Jo's maiden speech in the House of Commons: that we all have more in common than that which divides us.
- Kim, Jo's sister, 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. She said there could be no more fitting tribute to Jo's memory than The Great Get Together.

### 5. Video: To promote The Great Get Together

### 6. Reflection question: What could you/we do to get involved in The Great Get Together or to celebrate diversity in our community?

## Adaptions for secondary school

- 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).
- Reflection questions could be pre-discussed by one class and ideas presented to the assembly.
- Reference social media as a way to promote the message (e.g. by using the #moreincommon, #greatgettogether hashtags).
- Alternative videos to use could include: 'Momondo: The DNA journey' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyaEQEmt5ls&t=2s>) or 'All That We Share' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVOITc&t=7s>), both of which challenge the judgements we make about people and celebrate diversity. Please note: teachers should watch this video in advance to check it is in line with their schools policies.

## Classroom activities

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

### 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 and by asking questions. Examples of invisible similarities and differences might be hobbies, food, favourite subjects at school, favourite films, where you were born. It works well to model the game first. Working in pairs, pupils speak to one another to find three or more invisible similarities, and three or more invisible differences between them. You can then bring the class together, and ask for volunteer pairs or groups to share any similarities they have found.

### Changing Places game (10mins):

Students 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 like football."
- "Change places if you like fruit."
- "Change places if you have a sport you like?"
- "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.

### Changing Places follow up questions (5mins):

- Whilst playing the changing places game, ask 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?

### Celebrating Diversity (5-10mins):

Ask students to mind map or list ideas of what their school could do to promote and celebrate diversity or to tackle discrimination.

### Pledge Cards (10-15mins):

Students write on a postcard explaining what they are going to do differently or how they will change their behaviour as a result of the learning they have taken part in. This could follow the assembly or other activities selected above. Completed pledge cards could be displayed in a communal space in school.

### Project Planning (15-20mins):

In groups, students can work together to plan a Great Get Together event, thinking about what the event would be and where it would be held, who they would invite, how they would advertise, and the resources and deadlines they would need to meet their aims.

### Creative Activities (30-45mins):

Having taken part in the assembly, Invisible Similarities and Differences game or Changing Places game, students make #moreincommon and #greatgettogether posters representing things they found in common with others in their community. Teachers could photograph examples of students' work. Students could create bunting to decorate a school's Great Get Together event if they are holding one (alternatively students 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.

## Classroom activities

### Year group swaps (15 mins):

One of the issues Jo cared deeply about was loneliness. After work carried on by Jo's friends Rachel Reeves MP and Seema Kennedy MP, the UK government now has a Minister for Loneliness. The Great Get Together is one way to tackle loneliness as by meeting up with others we can reduce loneliness. In tutor time groups across school could meet others from another year group e.g. sixth form tutor groups and Year 7. The mixed groups could write Pledge Cards, find things they have in common and record similarities and differences. Pupils could also think about what they could do to tackle loneliness in their community.

### Jo's voting record (15-20mins):

Citizenship (GCSE) students or students in a tutorial session may be interested in seeing examples from Jo's voting record in order to facilitate a discussion about how Jo lived her beliefs through her actions. Here's a link to Jo's voting actions. [https://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/25394/jo\\_cox/batley\\_and\\_spen](https://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/25394/jo_cox/batley_and_spen):

## Sport and physical activity

Sport is a fantastic way for young people to be physically active and be the best they can be irrespective of their age, gender, ability, religion and environment. The Chief Medical Officer's recommendation is 60 minutes a day for secondary school students.

Here are some ideas from the Youth Sport Trust on activities to bring students together through sport:

### International Inspiration (30 mins):

Use these resource cards ([https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/international\\_inspiration\\_traditional\\_games\\_resources\\_full\\_set\\_part1.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/international_inspiration_traditional_games_resources_full_set_part1.pdf)) to engage pupils in traditional games from across the world, teaching them about different cultures and games and encouraging them to build communities that allow people to help and support each other to lead happier, healthier and productive lives.

### National School Sport Week:

Celebrate playing and learning together by signing up for free resources (<https://www.youthsporttrust.org/national-school-sport-week>) as part of the Youth Sport Trust's National School Sport Week. The resources contain lots of ideas for bringing an active element to your school's Get Together.

Why not consider a sports festival with an opening and closing ceremony celebrating different cultures or set up a range of sports activities giving students the opportunity to understand the importance of coming together through leading, coaching and officiating.