

Shared Planet

Theme: Sustainability, connectedness, hope.

Focus country: Brazil

Aim: This assembly looks at theme of shared responsibility, and supports One World Week (18-25 October), which seeks to inspire a culture of hope to build a more peaceful and equal world.

Materials required:

- Newspaper, ball of string, two jars of sweets
- The *Shared Planet* presentation, available from christianaid.org.uk/learn

Assembly presentation

Show slide 1. Ask pupils which countries they have heard mentioned in the news recently, then read out some age-appropriate headlines that mention different countries. Next, ask for some volunteers to stand in a circle with you. Hold on to the end strand of a ball of string and throw the ball to somebody else in the circle. Holding on to the string, ask them to throw the ball to another person. Keep the string tight as it criss-crosses the group. Once you've got a spider web effect, ask everybody to hold tight, and then pull on a strand. Who is affected? What happens? What would happen if you cut across the centre of the web? Explain that this assembly will be looking at how we are all connected.

Ask the pupils to think about their own homes. We usually know the people living in our own house very well, of course, but how well do we know the people living around us? Do you know the names of your next-door neighbours and what they do for a living? How about the people who live at the end of your street, or those a couple of roads away? What about people living in other countries? Of course, we can't know everyone well! It would be difficult to get to know everyone in our own street, and simply impossible to make friends with the 7 billion other people who live on this planet. But we are connected to all these other people – they are sometimes called our global neighbours. And even though we do not know all these people well, we do have something in common with

them: we share this **one world** that we live on! Ask pupils to name some of the rules that exist to make your school a pleasant and friendly space, such as not dropping litter and not bullying.

I'm sure that you also have rules at home to try to keep things peaceful and fair for everyone in your family. And in your local area, there will be rules to help people take care of each other – rules like not cycling on the pavements, and cleaning up dog mess. It is easy to think of ways in which we can be kind and considerate to the people in our school and neighbourhood. It is perhaps harder to think about ways in which we can look after people far away, whom we have never met. Ask pupils to suggest ways in which we are connected to our global neighbours and how we can look after each other (ideas include through the things we buy, such as Fairtrade products, or caring for our world by reducing pollution).

One of the big problems affecting many countries in the world today – including our own country – is the problem of inequality. Explain that inequality describes a situation in which some people have much more than other people. This might just mean that they have more material things, like money, or it might mean that they have more of something that you can't actually see, like power over other people.

Show slide 2. Brazil is the biggest country in South America. All of this land and all the

precious things it contains, like minerals in the ground and trees in the forests, mean that it's one of the world's top 10 richest countries. But Brazil is also one of the most unequal countries in the world. In Brazil, as in many other countries, there is a small group of very rich people who are thriving and a huge amount of very poor people who are struggling to survive. Imagine everyone in London standing together in a huge crowd and then double it. That is how many people in Brazil are living in poverty [the actual figure is 16 million – for different national contexts, you could say 'triple the number of people in Scotland' or 'eight times the people in Northern Ireland'].

One of the reasons that lots of people in Brazil are poor is because they don't own any land. Most of the land is owned by just a few people – just 3% of the population own more than two-thirds of the farming land. Using the two jars of sweets, estimate how much 3% of one jar would be and two-thirds of the other jar to visually display how unfair this is.

Show slide 3. We tried to think earlier about how we might be connected to our global neighbours. Deep in the Brazilian rainforest live the Quilombola people. They speak a different language and live a very different lifestyle to you. But these people are doing a job that is very important for all of us; they are helping to keep the Amazon rainforest safe by protecting some beautiful plants and animals that would otherwise be threatened with extinction. The Amazon rainforest helps the whole planet, because the billions of trees that grow there produce oxygen, which is very important for the atmosphere. The Quilombola people have been living in and caring for the Amazon for a long time; it is every bit as much their home as your house is to you.

Reflection

Ask pupils to think back to the beginning of the assembly, when you made the web of string in a circle. Now imagine if the people holding the string were not just pupils at this school, but people from different countries across the world. Can we see how interconnected we really are?

Further information

You can find out more about One World Week at oneworldweek.org

christianaid.org.uk/learn

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Show slide 4. The problem for Quilombola communities is that some people want to take their land, because lots of money can be made from it. How would you feel if somebody came to your home and started digging up the tree in your garden to sell the apples on it? It's not very fair is it? What is extra tricky is that until quite recently, the Quilombola people didn't have the legal papers to say they owned the land they have lived on for years, which made it very difficult for them to stop people trespassing on their land and destroying the rainforest.

Show slide 5. Christian Aid works with an organisation in Brazil called CPI, which helps the Quilombola people to protect their land. They have learned how to stand up to the companies who threaten their land and stop them from cutting down trees, and have now got the papers they need to prove they own the land. But CPI is not only helping the Quilombola people to protect themselves and their land, it is also helping protect our one world! By supporting the Quilombola people, CPI is helping to protect the beautiful forest of the Amazon from being cut down, and is therefore helping all of us who share this planet and rely on those trees.

Show slide 6. The Quilombola people used their own voice and their strength together as a community to solve the problem with companies taking their land. With help from CPI they made themselves more knowledgeable, and in turn were able to protect their precious forest – which is so important for all of us. So next time we think about our neighbours, let's think about the Quilombola people, far away in Brazil, and everything they are doing to look after the forest.