



Current Affairs Assembly

KS3 Relationships – Communication

Assembly



Barriers and bridges

Aim:

- To encourage pupils to consider the value of learning foreign languages

Introduction

Early learners

Good morning
Bonjour
Guten morgen
Bon Giorno
Buenos dias

I wonder how many of those languages you understand. I was using them all to say the same thing, 'Good morning', the greeting with which I began.

Michael Gove wishes he'd had the opportunity to learn more languages when he was young, and he thinks it's important that young children today have that opportunity. He would like UK children to begin learning a language from the age of five. It might actually happen, because Michael Gove is the Education Secretary, the member of the Government responsible for shaping what happens in schools like ours.

Looking Deeper

What's wrong with English?

Modern Foreign Languages are not the most popular subjects in a lot of schools. They are studied by a minority of students beyond Year 9. There are many reasons given for this: lack of obvious usefulness, difficulty, national pride, even mild racism. I'd like to suggest that we look a little deeper and consider whether languages might actually be an essential tool for life.

When Jesus created his church by giving the Holy Spirit to his followers there were two

overwhelming signs of that gift.

(You may wish at this point to read the account of this event in Acts chapter 2 verses 1 to 4)

The first sign was visual, the appearance of flames on the heads of the men and women present. The second sign could be heard in the streets around the place in which they were gathered; Jesus' followers began miraculously speaking in all sorts of different languages. People in the surrounding streets could hear the words of their own language, a wide variety from throughout the Roman world. For some reason it appeared to be important to Jesus that his followers could communicate not merely with their own fellow countrymen and women but to all nationalities.

Language builds bridges between people. It breaks down uncertainty, confusion, nervousness and prejudice. Language enables us to discover what we have in common rather than what divides us. Language initiates friendship, builds teams and creates trust. Just think of a Premiership football squad. It's not unusual for there to be representatives of a dozen nations, speaking almost as many different languages. Unless there is communication there's unlikely to be success on the pitch. Players must be either multi-lingual or agree on the working language that gains instant understanding in the split-second crises of a game. Breakdowns in communication lead to mistakes, to inefficiencies and to collapse. For a good example, just think of the Carlos Tevez affair and his claims that he was mistranslated when he apparently refused to go on the pitch. To those who don't speak a language, the language becomes a barrier. Those of you who've been on holiday in a country whose language you don't speak will understand what I mean. So, even though we're past the age of five, let's persevere with the bridge of language.



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Reflection

Language – Is it for me a source of confusion or a rich variety of options?

Language – Is it for me a barrier or a bridge into other cultures?

Language – How much am I willing to commit to learning to communicate?

Prayer

Lord God

You are God for the whole world.

You see us as one human family

May we use every bridge, including language, that helps break down the barriers that exist between us.

Amen

Thought of the day

Turn back at the barrier or build the bridge?

Keywords

Language

Communication

Michael Gove

Modern Foreign Languages

Barriers