

The soup stone

Aims

To show that everyone has a part to play in the school (and wider) community.

Assembly

Talk about the importance of coming together as a school and a community.

Tell the following story:

Once upon a time, in a remote village, a woman heard a knock on her door. She was surprised to find a traveller on her doorstep – visitors to her village were few and far between. The traveller had journeyed a long way, and he asked, very politely, for something to eat.

The woman replied sadly, 'I'm sorry, I have nothing in the house right now.'

The traveller smiled. 'Not to worry,' he said. 'I have a magical soup stone in my bag. If you will let me put it in a pot of boiling water, I'll make the most delicious soup in the world.'

The woman did not really believe the traveller, but she thought she had nothing to lose, so she lit a fire, filled her largest pot with water, and started to heat it.

While it was warming up she popped next door and whispered to her neighbour about her visitor and his magical soup stone. The neighbour whispered the story to her other neighbours, and by the time the water started to boil the whole village was crowded into the woman's kitchen.

While everyone stared, the stranger dropped the stone into the water. Then the stranger tasted a spoonful of soup and smacked his lips and cried out, 'Ah, delicious!' He paused for a moment, then added, 'All it needs is some potatoes.'

'I have some potatoes back in my kitchen,' shouted the neighbour and quickly went back to her house. In a few minutes she was back with a huge pile of sliced potatoes. The traveller placed them into the pot.

The traveller tasted again – 'Ah, marvellous!' he said. But then he added wistfully, 'But if only we had some meat, this soup could become a really tasty stew.'

Another villager rushed home to bring the meat that she had been going to use for that night's meal. The traveller accepted it with gratitude and added it to the pot.

Then he tasted it again: 'Ah, most excellent. If we just had some vegetables it would be perfect, absolutely perfect.'

One of the neighbours dashed back to her house and returned with a mountain of carrots and onions. These were added and boiled for a few minutes.

Then he tasted again and called out: 'Seasoning!' which was quickly handed to him.

The stranger took a final taste and danced with glee. 'Bowls and spoons for everyone!' he shouted.

People rushed off to their homes to find bowls and spoons. Some even brought back bread, cheese and fruit.

Then they all sat down to a delicious meal. The traveller ladled out large helpings of his magical soup. Everyone felt happy as they sat down to the very first meal they had shared as a whole village.

In the middle of the meal the stranger slipped quietly away, leaving behind the magical soup stone, which they could use any time they wanted to make the most delicious soup in the world.

Questions: Ask the children to think about the story. Did they think the soup stone was really magical? How was the soup really made? Explain that everybody worked together. There would have been no shared meal if it wasn't for the stranger and his stone, but the people did all the work and provided all the food.

Explain that sometimes it may seem like we are not important, that we have nothing to offer; but our story shows that we can all play an important role in making a good school or a good neighbourhood. We all have something we can throw into the pot to make it taste better. Even if all we have to give seems like a useless old stone, even a stone can be the thing that brings people together in new and exciting ways.

Time for reflection

Reflection

Close your eyes, and take a moment to remember our story...

Everybody had something to add to the pot...

Think about the abilities you have that can bring joy to those around you...

Maybe you are good at music or art or telling jokes or stories...

Maybe you can simply talk to someone who is sad or alone.

Whatever you can do, you can make a difference.

Prayer

Loving God,

Thank you for the good things you have given us.

Help us to be kind and generous.

Teach us to share.

Amen.