



DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN

methodology

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PANGEA



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Citizens who are democratically oriented consider not only ways to nurture the current democratic society but also ways to positively shape it in the future when it will be fully in the hands of today's children. We too feel it is important to start introducing the idea of democracy to children at a young age, so that it becomes a natural part of their personality. The things we do now to influence children will return in the future. We strive to make sure that today's children know words such as responsibility, respect, understanding, courage, persistence, patience, helpfulness, patriotism, honesty, integrity and more. The language does not differ for young children and adults. It is entirely up to us to decide when we allow children to understand these big words and their meaning. And it is only then that children can consciously start working with them.

If we look at the current efforts of European institutions to strengthen democratic attitudes of children, we find that education for democracy is indeed an emphasised educational topic throughout Europe. The Council of Europe promotes 6 key democratic principles in all its member countries and strives to make them attractive to the target group of children. What are these principles and how are they embodied?



Together, experts from all European countries have produced comprehensive guides for educators that show through concrete examples how to naturally lead children towards democracy. Our methodological guide is another contribution to the set of efforts to strengthen democratic attitudes of children living in Europe. It differs from existing methodologies in its holistic approach. It uses methods of experiential education and its comprehensive view of children's personality development. For more details, see the chapter on three pillars of developing democratic attitudes in children. Our conception combines two proven concepts that have evolved into well-established educational methods in the Czech Republic and Iceland. Both hold great potential to support children in an active relationship with the European community.



1) Virtue Education



Virtue Education

*One evening an old Native American man told his grandson about the battle that rages within every man. He told him, "Son, **the battle within each of us is a battle between two wolves. One is evil.** It is anger, envy, jealousy, sadness, selfishness, rudeness, hatred, self-pity, deceit, arrogance, and ego. **The other is good.** It is joy, peace, love, hope, composure, modesty, kindness, empathy, generosity, loyalty, compassion and trust." The grandson thought about all this and after a while he asked, "Which wolf will win?" The old Indian replied, "**The one you feed.**"*

Virtue Education is intended to feed the good wolf; we want to develop the positive personality traits that we have since we were born. Virtue Education helps each child to recognize their own strong virtues, to become aware of their weaknesses and accept them, to act with respect for the differences of others, appreciate their qualities, and become more independent and responsible. Thus, it contributes to the establishment of a "small" democracy in children's groups, where children can openly express their ideas about others and about the events that occur around them.

Virtue Education is not about creating an ideal race of well-behaved children who always know how to act virtuously. On the contrary, virtue education deals with human beings in their nature, including their imperfections. Its purpose is to enable children to live consciously from an early age, to find their strengths in the virtues which are natural to them and come easily to them, as well as their limitations – the virtues which seem difficult and challenging. Children decide for themselves whether they want to improve in any area. There is no desired set of standards for an ideally virtuous child towards which we would steer them. Rather, we uncover each child's uniqueness for them to see, understand and develop fully.



Virtue Education benefits



- The child can identify their own qualities and understand their uniqueness.
- The child becomes aware of their limitations and chooses the way to address them.
- The child becomes more independent and responsible, able to think and communicate about their inner processes.
- The child can consider their own positive impact on their environment.
- Children can identify strengths of others and approach each other with greater respect.
- Group climate improves.
- Children learn to recognize behaviours that lead to conflict and are able to replace them with steps that lead to an agreement.
- Children acquire tools for finding consensus, for peaceful coexistence in their class and for dealing with rules violations.

Virtues are flowers in the garden

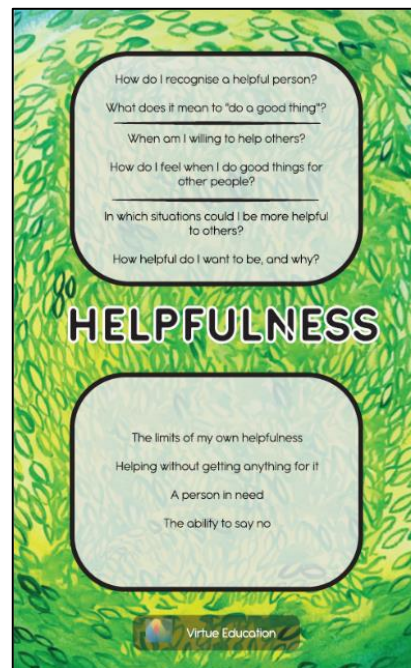
To help children understand the essence of virtues, we have chosen the metaphor of a garden in our methodology. The garden is a child's personality, and the virtues are the flowers that grow in the garden. If we take care of them, they will be strong, fragrant, and beautiful. If we don't, they will wither and the whole garden will look accordingly. Each personal garden has its own shape, atmosphere, colours, and scents. Every garden is unique, none is better than another and it is up to us to decide how we want to tend to our garden.

But what exactly does *virtue* mean? Is it a synonym for the word *value*? It is not. For some people, wealth or work are values just like friendship and courage, but these are not our innate qualities that make us a good person. Virtues are more subtle, purely personal, they are what shapes our character.



Virtue cards

To help children grasp more quickly what each virtue means, Virtue Education uses cards that depict and describe each virtue. Children see specific behaviours with which they are familiar on the cards, combined with a verbal description of the virtues. The cards show the abstract concept in action and help children understand and remember the virtues better. The flip sides of the cards provide questions for the teacher to discuss with the children and associated topics that can be explored.



Understanding abstract concepts

After several years of experimenting with virtue education, we have concluded that children need a **combination of three things to grasp the meaning of virtues – verbal description, practical activity, and visualisation.** These things enable them to understand abstract concepts and use them in real life.

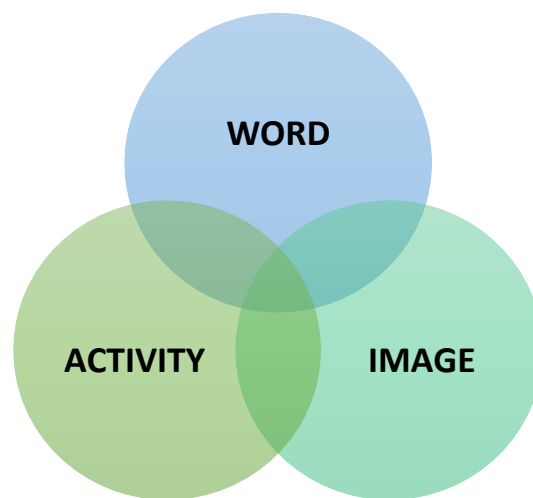
We simply use **verbal description** to name the virtues that are evident in children's behaviour- This makes the virtues more apparent to the children. We can use a one-word name for the virtue - PATIENCE. Or we can choose a more detailed description - ACCEPTING THAT SOME THINGS TAKE LONGER THAN WE WOULD LIKE.

Activities in which virtue is present arise spontaneously several times a day in a group of children. For example, when the children decide how to divide the chores in the classroom, reciprocity and responsibility emerge naturally. When they help a friend who has scraped their knee on the playground, caring and helpfulness are present. In addition to regular classroom activities, we can also

use planned play designed to accentuate a virtue and make it apparent to the children. Suitable games are described below in a separate chapter on practical activities.

An image is a visual code that helps children remember the meaning of a virtue in a way that is more easily grasped than words. Children remember the images and later associate them with the abstract meaning without difficulty. Each of our virtue cards shows a situation that children know from their own lives. The situation is linked to an experience that the child recalls by looking at the image.

We can illustrate the basic concept of Virtue Education as follows:



Teachers need to combine these components and use all three on a regular basis. The two key skills essential for teachers in Virtue Education are:

- 1) *including virtues as a learning objective in the activity plan,***
- 2) *focusing children's attention on virtues.***

These skills are crucial and indispensable in our methodology. They are what makes Virtue Education unique. The great thing about this concept is that it can be attached to any educational approach, be it in a traditional public school or one of the alternatives. There is no need to change anything. All that is needed is to supplement the regular program with a routine of focusing children's attention on virtues, that is, on what is happening inside them and how virtues are manifested in their outward actions. If we begin to implement it already in kindergarten, children will be better equipped for the school environment.

Bringing virtue to children's everyday life

For Virtue Education to be useful in children's personal lives, we don't just use the momentary situation to explain the meaning of a virtue, but always aim to explain it in the context of everyday life as well. Only by directing their attention to everyday life can the children truly benefit of Virtue Education and learn to continuously work with the virtues they have acquired throughout their lives well into old age. The teacher guides the children to understand virtues in the context of the classroom, their home, personal hobbies, and so on. Once the children understand a virtue, it becomes a fixed part of their thoughts and attitudes.

You will make your pupil's work simpler if you show him the everyday use of all you are teaching.

John Amos Comenius



2) Útiskoli



Outdoor School

Current research shows how important it is for children to spend time outdoors and to learn in a natural environment. In Iceland, the weather matters a great deal because it changes very quickly. Creating learning objectives requires a lot of flexibility. The unpredictability of the weather is seen as an advantage and each type of weather is handled differently. For example, playing in the rain is great for catching water, wet snow is used as a building material and when the sun is shining, shelters can be built using natural materials.

By working outdoors in all kinds of weather, children naturally learn to be flexible, to handle their needs in various conditions, and to be independent in caring for themselves and their friends in the group. They simply need to respond to outside stimuli such as humidity, temperature, wind, and snow. Working in a group under such conditions naturally **leads them to cooperate, respect and support each other**, which are aspects of a democratic society.

In Utiskoli, children learn by working with real objects. For example, learning geometry outdoors is much more effective than just counting area and volume with math books. We can study birds on paper by looking at textbooks, but when we go outside, we can see them in their natural habitat and observe their behaviour. We travel to historical or other significant places where children can gain a better understanding of events that have happened or are about to happen.

It is amazing to see the children become more active during outdoor learning and the quality of the learning process increase not only on an individual level but also on a group level. Children, under the influence of outdoor stimuli, often invent their own additions to the planned curriculum and learn more on their own than what was planned by the teacher. Such informal learning is important and leads children to take more responsibility for their own development because they have a say in what they learn. As children become more effective outdoors, they become more present and happier and develop greater courage, perseverance, and confidence.

The following learning objectives are stressed across all Utiskoli curricula.

Expression and communication
Listen for information and arguments in instructions
Is able to express appropriately and use the vocabulary related to the topic in each case/situation
Is able to express thoughts, opinions and knowledge in a way that is appropriate at any given time.
Creative and critical thinking
Is able to realize that it is possible to reach more than one conclusion when solving tasks and can learn from mistakes and use them creatively
Is understanding the difference between facts and opinions
Is looking at solving tasks from different perspectives in a creative way
Independence and cooperation
Can follow instructions and is responsible for own projects and practices when appropriate
Can realize their strengths
Can take a positive part in play and work in the school community
Can take direction positively
Responsibility and assessment of ones own learning
Is able to realize their strengths and what can be done better in their studies/education

3) Theoretical background

The question of democratic attitudes is addressed, among other disciplines, by the fields of **political psychology and the psychology of democracy**. PhDr. Martina Klicperová-Baker CSc., DSc. (based at the Institute of Psychology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, and working in collaboration with the University of San Diego) and her colleagues have conducted research on the preconditions for democratic behaviour. Specifically, they examined the social-psychological predispositions that contribute to a person's or nation's readiness for and inclination toward democracy. Her research on a sample of several thousand respondents, both nationally and internationally, shows that from a psychological standpoint, there are **three main pillars of democracy** (social-psychological dispositions for democracy). If these pillars are alive in society, as well as understood and respected by the people, there is a good chance that the nation will cope with occasional problems and crises and maintain democracy in the long term.

Social-psychological dispositions for democracy:

1) *Civic decency and ethics*

This group of dispositions includes all the moral qualities of a person, such as general respect and trust for other people, tolerance of differences in ethnicity, race or wealth, personal responsibility, honesty, and integrity. Democracy is predicated on many conflicts that sometimes pose a challenge to human decency. It involves both fulfilling the will of the majority and safeguarding the rights of minorities. It is freedom for all as well as equality, so it cannot be reached without negotiation and discussion. In a diversity of opinions, the civility with which different perspectives are presented and discussed, and the integrity with which they are asserted, are all the more important.

2) *Civic political culture*

This term does not refer to the work of politicians somewhere at the top, beyond the reach of ordinary citizens, but rather to the awareness of politics among ordinary people and the extent to which they seek to influence public life. Politics (from the Greek polis - city, politiké techné - municipal administration) is a term referring to the process and method of decision-making by a group of people with diverse interests and opinions. Civic political culture then means the extent to which ordinary people are interested in politics, understand it, and recognize which laws are good and which are not. It also is a question of whether they honour the laws; a matter of fundamental belief in democracy as a rational system and of one's willingness to contribute to the democratic process through some kind of activity, such as personal involvement in the local community.

3) *Patriotism*

Personal passion and emotional commitment are important in democracy, in addition to rational understanding. If it becomes too dry and bureaucratic, people lose interest in democracy. Patriotism gives democracy a kind of spice, an emotional civic and cultural foundation. Love of one's country and appreciation of all that has arisen and will arise from it is an important third pillar of democracy.

These three pillars are defined by PhDr. Martina Klicperová-Baker CSc., DSc. with her team of social-psychological scientists. We consider them an ideal basis for influencing children's personality in development of their democratic attitudes.

Our conception of three pillars of developing democratic attitudes in children

As mentioned at the beginning of this brochure, the European Union is attentive to the development of democratic attitudes in children and students. There are many guides available to help teachers bring this topic into the classroom (for example, materials from the Civic Education Centre, Czech Republic). Although they are attractively designed, it seems to us that they are primarily intellectual instructions, which only stimulate the rational part of children's personality.

Our ambition is to present a simple methodological system that is holistic. Holistic approach influences children's thinking, works with their emotions, and shapes their attitudes by linking the topic presented to an emotional experience. Practically, this means that children experience aspects of social psychological preconditions for democratic behaviour in real life. They do not learn rules, they do not have to memorize anything, they are simply shaped within their personality. We find Martina Klicperova-Baker's research to be the most useful as a starting point for defining a specific holistic methodology.

Building on Martina Klicperova-Baker's research, we also base children's education for democracy on three pillars. For each of them, we have set objectives towards which educators can progressively work.

The two national concepts that we bring together form the concrete content of these three pillars. In our years of experience, we have found that children are able to understand the abstract concepts

associated with democracy, ethics, and active citizenship, and to direct their civic behaviour accordingly.

The main objective of Virtue Education is to develop children's understanding of concrete inner qualities of the personality - virtues. Children learn to recognise virtues in their own experience and in the behaviour of others. They can discern which virtue is needed in a particular social situation and know how to relate virtues to positive patterns in society. They are able to use virtues such as respect, sensitivity, self-discipline, courage, reciprocity and so on to direct their actions to the benefit of the situation. The main objective of Útiskoli is active outdoor participation of children in the local community, with outcomes that benefit either the whole municipality or the school body. Both have an impact on children's thinking about what is desirable to do together for the good of the wider social unit. We bring the two approaches together and use them as concrete techniques for strengthening the social psychological preconditions of democracy.

It is advisable to combine the following pillars of developing democratic attitudes of children so that none of them is missing or predominant, while ensuring that none of them is merely formal.

1) Children's conscious work with their own moral qualities

This pillar is mainly based on the concept of Virtue Education. Its main objectives are the following:

- Children understand that they carry within themselves a world of ethical qualities and that they are free to decide to what extent they will use them in their actions.
- Children understand the meaning of individual virtues, can recognise them in their own experience and behaviour, and are able to see them in the actions of others.
- Children understand the importance of an individual's moral qualities for the functioning of democratic society.

It might seem that children are not capable of understanding big words such as togetherness, respect, self-respect, self-discipline, reliability, understanding, curiosity, and more. That these concepts are too abstract for them. The opposite is true. If children are shown the meaning of these words in concrete examples of human behaviour, they will easily understand their meaning and even begin to use them naturally in sentences. In fact, they will suddenly be able to name what is happening inside of them, in their hearts, in their volition, and in their minds. They will begin to notice their own inner states spontaneously and start to be able to distinguish whether they are facing an internal struggle with laziness and the need for perseverance, or with fear, where they lack courage; if they are currently

experiencing a warm pride in something they have accomplished, or if they want find respect for a friend who needs to do something they would not choose themselves, and so on.

When we start using the names for virtues in everyday language, children will easily learn them and start using them too. Children need to see and experience repeatedly **what it means to be generous, to behave sensitively, to be confident, to respect others, to be helpful to one another**, and so on. When such an opportunity arises in the normal running of a kindergarten, we seize it and make virtues evident through words. When older children help the younger ones to tie their shoelaces without our instruction, we appreciate their helpfulness. When children put toys away by their own accord, we mention their reliability. When children argue over a toy, we can say that they lack respect and understanding, and we can help them find them. In a natural, gentle manner, we use virtue words to be regularly perceived by children in different situations. We use them descriptively, not in a harsh or reproachful way.

"Miss teacher, Honza said I'm an idiot!"

"Oh, and you think that about yourself?"

"No."

"It's not what anyone says about you that's important, it's what you think about yourself. When you value yourself and think nice things about yourself, that's self-respect. I know you don't like what Honza said to you. You can tell him that you don't like it and that you know you're not an idiot!"

If children discover their positive inner world, they can contribute to mutual respect, respectful sharing of opinions and ethical behaviour from an early age. When they experience first-hand the benefits of ethical behaviour in a small group (a classroom), they will know that it is useful and will naturally apply it to civic situations as adults.

HARD WORKING



COURAGE



TOGETHERNESS



Virtues can be learned by practicing good. Just as children easily learn to run by running, to speak by speaking, to write by writing, so they learn obedience by obeying, temperance by being temperate, patience by being patient. But they need someone to lead them by word and example. The learners must therefore always have before their eyes the examples of the proper life of parents, nurses, teachers, and friends.

John Amos Comenius

2) Active civic life of children

Even young children can actively contribute to a quality civic life. They just need adults to show them the value of such behaviour and teach them how to do it. We can show children that they can have a big impact on community affairs. Because children naturally feel that the adult world is run by adults, and it does not occur to them that they can influence it too. Teaching children at a young age to think about the consequences of their behaviour and to see civic situations in which they can make a difference by their efforts is a beautiful task for parents and teachers.

It is important to help children initially in their civic-oriented activities and to teach them to plan, organize their group work, and solve possible problems. We can guide them toward these goals:

- Children understand the importance of active citizenship for the functioning of a democratic society.
- Children can design their own involvement in civic activities in school or in the local community.
- Children develop procedural independence in their civic activities.

Iceland's Utiskoli is a concept full of concrete projects for children's active civic life. The children in the programme go out and are useful to the local community from an early age. By doing these activities on a regular basis, they gradually develop the idea that doing something for the good of the whole is natural. With each project, they also learn the skills necessary for cooperation - planning, organising, implementing a plan in successive steps, and evaluating; simply put: skills useful for adult life.

3) Emotional relationship to one's country

This pillar of our methodology is most closely linked to the emotional side of children. Most existing methodologies of democratic education work in two steps:

1. they provide children with information on important aspects of democracy in various forms;
2. they guide children in various ways to process this information (record sheets, discussions, and the like).

This approach is certainly meritorious, but it omits the involvement of children's hearts. Furthermore, it addresses democracy in general, and not in relation to the specific country that is home to the group of children. Emotions arouse children's interest in their own country. If children feel an emotional connection to their country, it becomes more significant to them, and they will naturally feel the need to care for it. If such a connection can be made at national level, we can follow by strengthening the emotional attachment to the whole European continent.

Targeted work with emotions is part of the experiential learning used by both Virtue Education and Útiskoli. That is why, in this part of the methodology, we will propose specific activities to awaken love of one's own country.

Practical activities

Practical activities are divided into three groups based on the respective pillars of the methodology. All activities descriptions include reflection, which is a vital part of the whole process. Reflection reinforces AHA moments in children's experience and increases learning impact. Children take away more, because in reflection they have time to name their experience, to become aware of it and consequently to incorporate it into their thinking. In reflection, teacher guides children to think of more democratic ideas and concrete suggestions for improving civic life. Reflection also includes establishing agreements in the children's group which leads to a gradual improvement of the class climate, mutual respect, and greater synergy among the children in the class.

For each pillar we list several activities as inspiration. The list of activities is certainly not final. Our aim is to demonstrate how to work with our methodology in practice. All three pillars can be filled with other activities depending on the school's or teacher's preference.



1) Practical activities I – Children’s conscious work with their own moral qualities

HONESTY

Activity: Conscience

Environment: indoors

Duration: 30 minutes

Resources: black cardstock, white tempera, paintbrushes, engraving tips

Introduction: Show the children two sheets of paper - a white one and a black one. "*Children, which of these sheets of paper do you think represents my bad conscience and which is my clean conscience? What do you think, can the black one turn into the clean white one? I wonder how much work that will take? We can try it with paint.*"

Description: Each child gets a sheet of black cardstock. They can choose its size. Then they use tempera paint to turn the paper white. As they work, they will find that they need to use a lot of paint before they get a layer of white thick enough to completely cover the black. The children are then asked to engrave people who have clear conscience into the not yet dry paint. They can engrave with the other end of the brush, for example. The children are also asked to engrave the facial expressions of the people with clear conscience. Finally, we look at the pictures and focus the children's attention on the smiling faces of the engraved characters.

Reflection: We can reflect on the fact that there is always the possibility of turning a black conscience back into a clean one. That it is better to be honest and correct our mistakes, even if we are sometimes afraid to admit them.



Variation: Children can also try the opposite: to turn a white sheet into a black one. They can compare which was easier. They can engrave people with bad conscience into the black paint and compare the two pictures.

Author: Martina Štolbová

RESPONSIBILITY

Activity: Untidy Stinker

Environment: indoors/outdoors

Duration: 30 minutes

Resources: paper, scissors, pencils, rope

Preparation: Prepare cards with names of rubbish (can, plastic bottle, pickle jar, ...). You need at least twice as many cards as there are children in the class. Set up the lair of the Untidy Stinker near the playing field. Untidy Stinker is a leprechaun who likes to surround itself with rubbish. The lair is made with rope in the shape of a circle small enough for the leprechaun to walk around and protect.

Introduction: How do we help the environment? Each child writes/draws on a piece of paper how they help the environment, and how they take care of it. Afterwards, we discuss with the children what responsibility means in relation to nature, what is responsible behaviour and what is not. We create a sun, placing the RESPONSIBILITY card in the middle and gluing the children's slips of paper around it in the shape of a sun. The children usually say that they take care of the environment by sorting their waste. If no-one thinks of this, we can guide them with questions on the topic of recycling. We can also combine this activity with litter picking around the school (see the litter picking activity in section 3). We discuss that rubbish should not be put into the environment and how we recycle it.

Description: Place the cards with the names of rubbish outside or in the classroom. The children form two teams. One child from each team runs out and picks up a card with a type of rubbish, then they have to recycle it correctly in their team's bin. Each team has their own recycling bins and the team that collects the most rubbish wins. The teacher dresses as Untidy Stinker and seizes the children's sorted rubbish at an unexpected moment and empties it into their lair. The children are now not competing, but working together and must retrieve the rubbish from Untidy Stinker and sort it back into the correct bins. Untidy Stinker can't see very well, but he can smell and hear, so the children have to move very quietly. Anyone who makes a quick, noisy movement is touched by the Stinker and has to run home to take a shower, so he doesn't stink (they go to a designated place where they count to 10 to join the game again). The teacher gradually allows the children to pick up the rubbish from the circle and defeat Untidy Stinker.

Reflection: Talk about how our responsibility towards our environment can manifest by picking up a chocolate bar wrapper or an empty plastic bottle on a family hike.

Author: Pavla Příbylová



RESPECT

Activity: Forest pictures

Environment: forest

Duration: 40 minutes

Resources: natural materials in the forest, large colourful scarves, bell

Preparation: Place three coloured scarves on the ground as a work surface for the groups. The scarves are a few meters apart.

Introduction: We encourage children to look for beautiful details in nature. "*Children, nature can create beautiful things. Look at this root here, how it is bent and twisted into the shape of a bowl or a plate. See if you can find any beautiful detail here in the forest.*" Each child finds one small thing and they show it to each other. "*Humans can make beautiful images out of natural things. Let's give it a go, shall we?*"

Description: Each child finds 10 pinecones (or other type of nature material). The children are divided into teams of three. Each team sits down in front of one scarf and is asked to make a picture of the pinecones without talking by taking turns placing the cones on the scarf. The cones cannot lie on their own, they must touch. The first of the three children places a cone on the scarf, then the second puts a cone next to it, then the third. In this way they keep taking turns until they run out of cones. Then we call the children to come together in a circle and ask them what it was like for them to respect the others' work, as they altered the image with their cones. Was it hard or easy? If anyone gets upset, calm their emotions and explain how respect works.

Next, everyone collects 10 sticks, and the teams move to a different scarf. In the second round, they arrange the sticks in the same way, but they work with a picture of a different art group. The sticks must be touching either another stick or a cone, they cannot lay on their own on the scarf. This round too is followed by a discussion on respect in the circle.

The third round takes place at a different scarf with 10 stones (or whatever can be found in the forest).

Finally, the teams return to their original picture and see how the others have completed it. Each team gives their piece a name and then everyone introduces their picture to the others.

Reflection: Sitting in a circle with the children, show the RESPECT card. Talk about where it was needed in the activity, where we feel it in our body, if it is heavy and why. Together make a list of classroom situations where respect is needed.

Author: Jana Haková





PRIDE

Activity: Pride mountain

Environment: any

Duration: 20 minutes (ongoing)

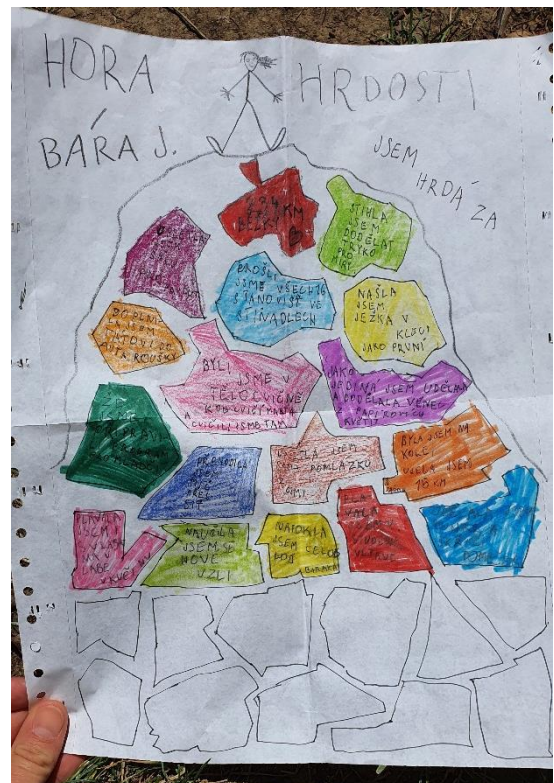
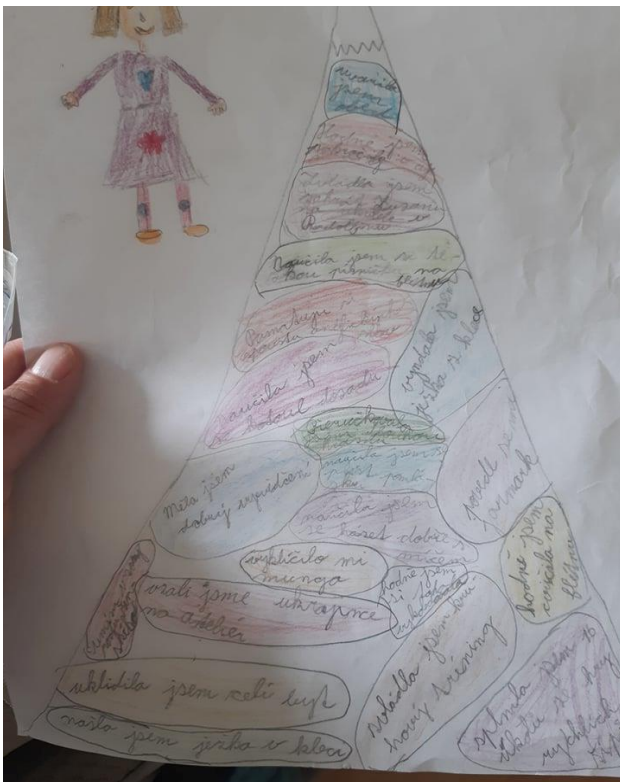
Resources: paper, crayons, images of large semiprecious stones

Introduction: Each of us has achieved something in life and has some skills. We can imagine all these things as beautiful stones, semiprecious stones. Look at pictures of semiprecious stones with the children. Each of these semiprecious stones is already in our lives, it belongs to us and is part of our mountain of success. Each of us has a mountain like that.

Description: Children first draw an outline of a mountain. They draw themselves on the top of the mountain. Then they use crayons to draw various semiprecious stones of their achievements, including descriptions (things they know, things they have achieved, things they are good at). The mountains should not be filled, there should be room for more drawing. The mountains are signed and displayed in the classroom. The children return to them throughout the school year to add more semiprecious stones. At the end of the year, the mountains can be part of the children's self-assessment.

Reflection: In a circle, talk with the children about the virtue card PRIDE. How does the boy in the picture feel about his mountain of achievements? How do you feel when you succeed at something? Where does that good feeling come up in your body? What are some things of which we can be proud?

Author: Jana Haková





HONESTY

Activity: Honest race

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 40 minutes

Resources: dice, plastic plates, 5 ropes, whistle

Preparation: In a large area, lay 5 ropes parallel to each other at the distance of about 10 meters. The ropes at the far end mark START and FINISH.

Introduction: Each child receives a dice and a plastic plate. Sit in a circle and start a race to see who can roll a six first. The children roll the dice on their plate and whoever rolls a six, stands up. When all the children are standing, talk about how hard it sometimes is to be the last when the others have finished, and we still can't reach the goal. That those are the moments when we might feel like cheating a little, so we can be done too. In those moments, it's up to us whether we choose to be honest and follow the rules or not and reach the goal by cheating. Invite the kids to a race that will test their honesty.

Description: The children stand side by side with the dice and plates on the starting line at the first rope. Once the race starts, the children have to roll an even number as quickly as possible (smaller children 1,2,3). If they succeed, they can run to the next rope. There, they roll the dice only once. If they roll an even number again, they can move on to the third rope, if they roll an odd number, they have to return to the previous rope and roll again there. They always advance if they roll an even number and return if they roll an odd number. At the starting rope they can roll multiple times in a row until they hit an even number. At the other ropes they roll only once each time. At the fifth and final rope they must roll an even number to confirm completion of the race. The winner is the one who reaches the finish line first. We play until the first three children complete the race, then the game ends.

Reflection: Sit in a circle with the children and place a bowl of white and dark beans in the middle. Invite the children to take two beans, one of each colour. Then pass around a dark canvas bag with this instruction: *"Everyone answers fairly to yourselves whether or not you were honest during the game. If you were and you didn't cheat even once, put a white bean in the bag. If you weren't, put in a dark bean. Put the other one in your pocket and later throw it in the grass. No one will know who put which bean in the bag. Now let's all be honest."* Pass the bag around and the children put the beans in it. When it reaches you, spill the contents on one of the plates. Let's count the result. *"Each of us has the opportunity to be honest. Here we see how we made our choices during the game."* Choose your next questions based on the colour of beans on the plate.

Author: unknown / edited by Jana Haková





TRUST, RESPONSIBILITY

Activity: Sharpsights

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 40 minutes

Resources: scarves, stopwatch, paper, pencil, juice, small bottles

Preparation: Choose a play area that is large and flat (for example, a playground or meadow) so that the children have to run a greater distance while playing.

Introduction: Tell the children the story of the wicked wizard. *"Once upon a time, an evil wizard came to a kingdom. He crept through the city and blinded and paralyzed everyone he met with his dark spells. The people were almost afraid to leave their homes, for there were few left who were not under the curse of the evil wizard. However, the brave villagers discovered that a good fairy lives in the woods who can brew a potion that works as an antidote. And so, the brave sharp sighted and undaunted villagers decided to save their loved ones and their neighbours and set out with them to get the magic potion that was their only hope of salvation. And they had to hurry, time was of the essence!"*

Description: Divide the children into groups of villagers. There are three children in each group - one healthy and two sick. Explain the following rules to the children:

- All three children must walk together to the fairy to get the healing potion in the shortest possible time.
- Only one of them can see and the others are blindfolded. The children stand side by side, the middle one can see, the ones on the outside are blindfolded.
- The children who stand next to each other have their legs tied together, so both the child on the left and on the right are tight to the child in the middle.
- The blind villagers are not allowed to speak while travelling to the fairy. This is caused by the evil wizard's spell.

The children are given time to decide on their strategy. During this period everyone can talk and see. Their task is to select the sharpsight and agree on how they will proceed and communicate.

Groups line up on the starting line next to each other, tie their legs together, and everyone except for the sharpsights is blindfolded. Once the game starts, the groups of three walk to the finish line where the fairy sits. She gives the blind a healing drink (juice in a bottle), when they have drunk it, they are healed and can remove the blindfold and untie their legs. Then the whole healthy trio runs back to the village. Write down their time when they return. The game is not competitive, only compare times of the multiple attempts of the same group so that the children can see their improvement. If you encourage the children, they will enjoy figuring out how to coordinate better and how to make the movement faster on the next attempt.

Variation: To make the game easier for younger children, do not tie their legs together but simply instruct them to hold hands.

Reflection: Was it hard to trust a friend and rely on them when blindfolded? Which role was more enjoyable? In what situations in life do we need to trust other people 100%? Do you have situations in your life where you are responsible for someone? What are they? For whom?

Author: Pavla Příbylová



UNIQUENESS

Activity: Empty memory cards

Environment: indoors

Duration: 2 x 30 minutes

Resources: watercolours, empty memory cards, bowl of pebbles

Description: Each child creates two identical memory cards (or multiple pairs) based on an idea that captures their uniqueness (for example my favourite toy, my dreams, my family, my success, my future profession, and so on). After they have finished drawing, place the UNIQUENESS card in the centre of the circle and have the children place their cards around it. Explain what uniqueness means and ask the children how uniqueness is beneficial to the group.



Then play a regular memory game with the cards but add one rule - if you find the right pair and also correctly identify to whom the pair of cards belongs and what it represents, you get a pebble as well. At the end of the game, you have two winners. The one who has the most pairs of memory cards and the one who has the most pebbles.

Reflection: After the game, we can follow up by talking about what each child remembers about the others. For older children, we can add a challenge - pick a unique characteristic of one of your classmates and come up with a question for them that will help you learn more, for example, "How old is your youtuber brother? Why do you want to be a singer?"

Author: Jana Haková



KINDNESS

Activity: Kind sentences

Environment: indoors/outdoors

Duration: 40 minutes

Resources: paper, pencils, costume of a diplomat, glasses, non-alcoholic champagne, A3 sketchpad, marker.

Preparation: Write a few examples of unkind sentences you hear in the classroom in a larger sketchbook.

Introduction: Enter the classroom wearing a jacket playing a diplomat. *"Good morning, dear children. I am a diplomat. I make sure that people are able to communicate well with each other. We diplomats try to teach others how to talk to each other so that they don't offend each other and can get along. I came here today for a little survey to see if there's anyone among you who has a talent for diplomacy. So, I have prepared a little quiz for you."*

Description: Divide the children into groups of three and hand out papers with unkind sentences written on them. For example: *Don't do it, you idiot! Get out! Give it to me, it's mine! You snitch! I had it first!* The children are asked to think of a kind version of these sentences. The original meaning should be preserved in the new sentences, but it should be expressed in kind words. For younger children, do not use written sentences, but assign each group one sentence that they can remember and translate into kind language. When the children are ready, read the new sentences. The diplomat first reads the original unkind sentence and then all groups read their new sentence. Comment on the new sentences in the role of the diplomat. You might give credit to the one we think is the best phrased but identify exactly for what you are praising the group. When all the sentences have been reviewed, thank everyone for their work and, as is customary at diplomatic parties, toast the success of the diplomatic mission with champagne.

Reflection: Talk with the children about how kindness transforms human relationships. Select the unkind sentences and decide to exchange them for kind ones in your class. Finally, write the kind version of the sentences on a piece of paper and display them in your classroom.

Author: Jana Haková

2) Practical activities II – Active civic life of children

RESPONSIBILITY

Activity: Visual riddles

Environment: indoors/outdoors

Duration: ongoing activity

Resources: paper, crayons, pictures of places

Introduction: Show the children pictures of neglected places in different parts of our country. Ask if they would like to live in such a place and discuss how communal spaces should be looked after - how they are maintained, by whom, and why. Invite the children to go for an afternoon walk around the neighbourhood and find an area that is neglected, get a close look at the place, and notice what is around - houses, roads, trees, train station, shops and so on.

Description: The children draw a layout of the place they have found at school. They also record the names of shops or streets. If they are not sure, they can complete the assignment in the following lesson to get time to see the place again. Together look at the pictures one by one and try to identify the location. If the children are unsure, the author can help. Once you have seen all the pictures, brainstorm ideas on what can be done for such places. Together decide which place you will help and how. Create a plan that you need to prepare for (materials, clothes, tools). When you are ready, go to the selected place on a designated day and work there together.

Reflection: After the workday, talk about civic responsibility. Why is it important? When should we begin to be responsible? Do we want to help another place? Who else can we invite to join us?

Author: Veronika Žáková



CARING

Activity: Making birdfeeders, bird watching

Environment: indoors/outdoors

Duration: ongoing activity

Resources: toilet paper rolls, milk cartons, birdseed, string, camera, vegetable fat

Introduction: Talk about birds that spend the long winters in Iceland (for example sparrows and ravens). Show pictures of them in the frozen landscape. What changes do we see in nature in winter? Do the children help to feed the birds at home? How can we help them survive the winter?

Description: First, talk to the children about what kinds of feeders can be made from toilet paper rolls and milk cartons. We can have some examples made to demonstrate. Let the children choose what kind of feeder they want to make. The children then cut out windows on the milk cartons or on the roll, attach the string tightly, mix the seeds with the fat and fill their feeders. Each child records the weight of the seed mixture they put in the feeder.

In the second part of the activity, go outside and let everyone place their bird feeders on a tree. The children take a photo of the spot and save it to a file on a computer at school. Over the next few days, they return to the feeders, take more photos, and watch the birdseed disappear from the feeders. They refill the birdseed and record the amount they have added. We can observe from a distance and photograph the birds that appear at the feeder. For each bird we see at the feeders, we can give additional information – for example, how much they eat on average per day, when they lay their eggs, when the chicks hatch, ...

The children create a time-lapse from the photographs, which they print and display in the classroom in the spring. They add the names of the birds they saw in the winter and the amount of birdseed they put in the feeders.

Reflection: Sitting in a circle, each person counts how many birds they have fed over the course of the project and place the same number of crayons in front of them. Count all the crayons in the circle and talk about the impact of the class on the local ecosystem. Discuss what caring means and where else we can use it in our community.

Authors: Bláskogaskóli Laugarvatn staff



HARD-WORK, TOGETHERNESS

Activity: Workday near the school building

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 6 hours

Resources: tools for work in the garden or in the forest – rakes, shovels, spades, hoes, saws, wheelbarrow, loppers, gloves, camera, video recorder, drone if available, large sheets of paper, index cards, markers.

Preparation: Create large sign-up sheets for each activity. Each sheet will indicate type of work, materials needed, and the number of people needed. Prepare blank index cards for names.

Introduction: Talk to the children about the goals we set at the beginning of the school year to work on together. One of the goals is to improve the environment in which we spend a great deal of time. With the help of parents, we can accomplish much more. Show the cards TOGETHERNESS and HARD WORK and talk about what the children see on them and how it resembles the work that they will do with their parents.



Description: On the day of the event, display the sign-up sheets in a visible place. Each participant writes their name on a card, selects which activity they will do first and tapes their card to the sheet. This way, children and parents are visibly divided into work groups based on their preferences and no activity is left undone. There are also two teachers for each activity. The work groups stay in one

place for 60 minutes, then everyone moves their card to a different place and performs a different task.

Examples of activities that can be carried out on the school premises: greenery maintenance, raking, trimming trees, tidying pavements, building a fire pit, constructing an insect hotel, painting a hopscotch on a pavement, painting benches, building a shed, trimming hedges, and so on.

Having a workday with parents is a great challenge for everyone. The children are excited to show off in front of them. Parents, in turn, set an example for their children and can serve as great motivators. At the end of the day, everyone is happy when they see how much work they have done together, what they have built and how they have improved the school environment.

In addition to work groups, you can also create a group of children reporters who document the whole day and then produce a report which can be published (for example a piece for the school magazine or local paper, a video, and the like).



Reflection: Talk to the children on the following day. Place the card **TOGETHERNESS** in the centre of the circle. How was togetherness useful to us yesterday? Then present the second card to the children - **HARD WORK**. How do these two virtues help people improve the place where they live? Where have you seen togetherness among people in our community? Where have you seen hard work? How can we make these virtues more present in our community and motivate others to help as well?

Authors: Bláskogaskóli Laugarvatn staff

CARING, PERSISTENCE

Activity: Bird-watching

Environment: outdoors

Duration: regularly

Resources: a pair of professional binoculars, a notebook, a pencil, a computer

Description: As a part of Utiskoli curriculum, we go outside with the children and observe local birds with professional binoculars. The children keep a record of the species and their numbers. We are accompanied by a staff member from the ornithology centre who tells us more detailed information about the birds.

Bird monitoring is not a one-time activity. The school has been involved in bird monitoring for many years. We also monitor birds by ringing them in cooperation with the ornithological centre. This means that we know exactly how long it takes for them to return; if a particular pair of birds came earlier or later this year; what is the duration of the nesting season, etc. We keep detailed records of all our activities, which we digitise and share with the local ornithological station. In this way, we collect data that is of high value not only for the children, but also for the centre, which draws conclusions about local climate changes based on the results of the monitoring. An integral part of the activity is tracking and comparing data from previous years. This allows the children to see the differences from one year to the next.

The children really enjoy this regular activity. Especially the ringing of captured birds is an activity that requires a caring approach so that the birds are not harmed and can continue to live freely after human intervention. The activity is framed by two virtues - PERSISTENCE and CARING. Posters of both virtues are hanging in the classroom next to photos of the monitored birds.

Reflection: Discuss the following questions with the children - Why is it important to care about the natural ecosystem in the place where we live? What can each of us do to nurture it? Write the answers to the second question on a large piece of paper. After your brainstorming, read all the ideas together and have each child glue one sticky dot to an activity they would like to do with the class. Based on the results, create a plan for taking care of the local environment with the children.

Authors: Bláskogaskóli Laugarvatn staff



PERSISTENCE, RESPONSIBILITY

Activity: Car monitoring

Environment: outdoors

Duration: regularly

Resources: notepads, pencils, computer

Introduction: Several hundred vehicles pass through Laugarvatn every day, because it is on the route to the most popular tourist attractions in Iceland, Geysir and Gullfoss Waterfall. By monitoring the traffic, we can learn interesting information about the situation in our town.



Description: We monitor from a safe distance and close to a speed bump to ensure that drivers are moving at a suitable speed to give us enough time to record all the information. This activity can be further developed by comparing the data with the data from the local emission station to see the impact of traffic on air pollution in different types of weather.

The children like this activity very much because the drivers often greet them by honking and waving. It is easy to link it to the virtues of PERSISTENCE, because the monitoring must be regular and long-term, and RESPONSIBILITY, because the data must be accurate.

Reflection: Reflection can be done after each monitoring or at the end of the project. We talk to the children about how their motivation to monitor traffic changed during the project. We lead them to think about how helping the local community is sometimes challenging and requires persistence. What made you keep working on the project responsibly, even when you were not feeling like it? What helps us persevere in activities that we no longer enjoy?

Authors: Bláskogaskóli Laugarvatn staff



RESPONSIBILITY

Activity: Collecting rubbish in the school premises

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 90 minutes

Resources: garbage bags, gloves, pictures of garbage in nature

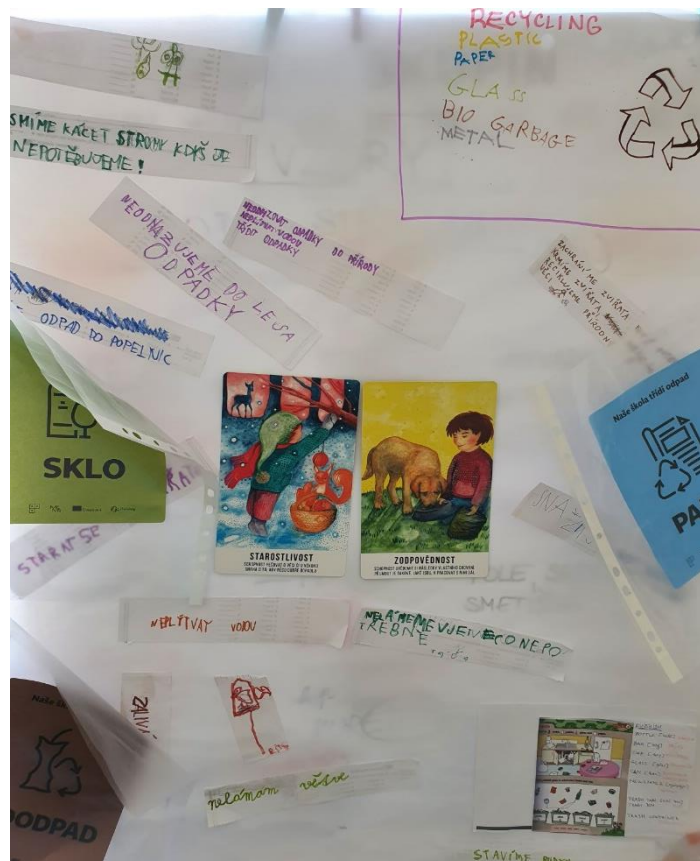
Introduction: Look at pictures of rubbish thrown around in nature with the children. Talk about how the environment deals with these conditions, how plants grow, and animals survive in it. Try to imagine the character of a person who litters in this way. What is this person's responsibility towards the nature? Play the song RESPONSIBILITY.

Description: Take the children outside the school to pick litter and to do something for the environment. By our own example, we teach the children that every little action counts and that each of us can contribute to the common goal of a cleaner planet. We encourage children to care of the environment they are in every day. By doing so, we activate their mindfulness and positive attitude towards the environment and show them the importance of their own active care for the planet.

The activity can be included in the Earth Day on the 22nd of April, or we can join the Clean up the Czech Republic initiative, which is held regularly every year in spring and autumn.

Reflection: Show the children the card RESPONSIBILITY and talk about what it means to be responsible and care for the place where we live - keeping it clean, free of litter, safe, welcoming; caring for its development and meaningful use.

Author: Pavla Příbylová



HELPFULNESS

Activity: Musical performance in senior citizens' home

Environment: senior citizens' home

Duration: 3 x 60 minutes

Resources: musical instruments, props for the songs, small gifts for the seniors

Preparation: Ask the children to bring photos of their ancestors from home, at least two photos of the same person - one from their childhood or youth and one from their old age. Arrange a visit to the local social services centre.

Introduction: Look at the photos children have brought and talk about the difference in the appearance of people at different ages. Let the children look at their own hands and imagine that one day they will be old and wrinkled. Talk about all the ways an old person can be beautiful - calm, kind, wise, able to give advice, and so on.

Description: Prepare a 45-60-minute-long music program with the children. Practice singing and background music. Some songs can be performed in costumes or masks. Make small gifts for the senior citizens with the children with love.

During the performance, introduce each song with the title or some interesting facts about it. The songs are accompanied by musical instruments played by the children (bells, ukulele, triangle, claves, ...). At the end, the children give the seniors small gifts they have prepared for them - gingerbread, greeting cards.

Reflection: Talk to the children about how they feel about the performance. Invite the children to try to name what feelings the performance might have evoked in the seniors. Place the card HELPFULNESS in the centre of the circle and ask how this card relates to our performance. Why is helpfulness important in life? Who is helpful towards you? Who do you help? Can helpfulness be learned? What makes a person helpful?

Author: Pavla Příbylová



RESPONSIBILITY, CARING

Activity: Patronages

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 90 minutes

Resources: depending on the type of activity - gloves, work clothes, spades, rakes

Preparation: The Dobromysl Forest Community School in Prague joined the Patronates project in 2022. In the Patronates programme, groups of children and young people learn how to become actively involved in nature conservation. The aim of the programme is to connect a school or other group of children with an expert and with the manager of a protected area, and to direct young people towards effective conservation activities. The children look after 'their' piece of land and learn about the environmental value of the place, the functioning of the habitat and many other related details.

Dobromysl was assigned to the area around the observatory Ďáblice in Prague. The children met with a representative from the Prague City Council, the owner of the land and the expert botanist Tomáš Frantík. They gave us an overview of what we need to do in the area and how we can take care of the site.

Description: During the first phase, we cleared the area of weeds and bushes. Then we worked together with the children to design other ways of engaging with the site to help restore its biodiversity. The ideas will be consulted with the two experts assigned to the project. Once the proposals are approved, we will move forward.

Reflection: Talk to the children about how our behaviour can help or harm the environment. Intentionally guide children to be responsible and care for a particular place in our environment.

Authors: Dobromysl Praha staff





3) Practical activities III – Emotional relationship to one's country



VLASTENECTVÍ

LÁSKA A ÚCTA K ZEMI, KTERÁ JE MOU VLASTÍ,
A HRDOST NA VŠE DOBRÉ, CO Z NI POCHÁZÍ



PATRIOTISM

LOVE AND RESPECT FOR MY HOMETLAND, TAKING PRIDE IN ALL THE
GOOD THAT COMES FROM MY OWN COUNTRY



ÆTTJARARÁST

ÁST OG VIRÐING FYRIR HEIMALANDI SÍNU OG STOLT YFIR ÖLLU
DVI GÓÐA SEM ÞADAN KEMUR

CURIOSITY AND PATRIOTISM

Activity: Baking Rúgbrauð bread in a hot spring

Environment: outdoors

Duration: ongoing

Resources: ingredients for the bread, pots, clingfilm, spade

- 3 cups rye flour
- 1 ½ cups whole wheat or all-purpose flour polohrubé mouky
- 2 ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 750ml kefir
- 1 cup golden syrup

Introduction: We tell the children that local people have always baked bread in the local hot spring. In the past, people used to bake bread and then take it to work or on a trip. Invite the children to try to gather recipes for this traditional bread from the older locals and bake it themselves. Baking bread in a hot spring is an Icelandic national specialty that other European countries cannot experience. It's a kind of local marvel. It may seem like a common activity to the children, because they have seen this way of baking bread since they were very young. Yet it is a precious national tradition and part of Icelandic history. Show the children the card PATRIOTISM and talk about what else is typically Icelandic.



Description: The children are divided into smaller groups. Each group has to find a recipe for Icelandic bread. They may ask their grandparents at home or the shop assistant at the local grocery store, simply anyone. The most important thing is that they look for the recipe and write it down together. The recipes are shared the following day. The teacher uses the recipes to prepare the ingredients for the following week.

The groups divide the ingredients based on their recipe and mix them slowly so there are no lumps in the dough. The children take turns weighing the ingredients and mixing the dough. Everyone in the group works together. When the dough is ready, they pour it into a buttered pan and secure it with plastic wrap to prevent water from getting in.

The groups walk together to the hot spring and bury their pan in the ground. The bread is ready in 24 hours. The following day, they dig out the pot, let it cool and tip it over on the table. Everyone tastes each other's bread, they also bring a piece to those from whom they got the recipe.

Reflection: Reflection takes place while eating bread. We discuss what would happen if no one ever baked this kind of bread again looking at the PATRIOTISM card. Who can we teach how to bake this kind of bread? What can we do to ensure that other Icelandic traditions are not lost? What other traditions will we try together?

Authors: Bláskogaskóli Laugarvatn staff



PATRIOTISM

Activity: Making flags for Independence Day

Environment: indoors/outdoors

Duration: 60 minutes

Resources: colourful paper, skewers, scissors, glue

Introduction: Independence Day is also the **day of the establishment of the Republic of Iceland**. On the 17th of June 1944, Iceland became an independent country after the people voted in a referendum to end the union with Denmark and decided to form a republic. This makes it one of Iceland's most important holidays. People walk in a parade and Icelandic flags fly everywhere. We invite the children to make them too to be ready for this day.

Description: Children cut and prepare papers to make the flag. They put all the pieces together and glue them on a skewer. The children who come from another country or are from a bilingual family can also make a flag of their other nation.

Everybody writes what they like about Iceland on the flag. We guide the children to think about different topics - nature, music, celebrities, books, films, artists, athletes, and so on. Children read to each other what they have written on the flag.

Reflection: Reflection takes place in a circle, with the PATRIOTICSM card in the middle. What do we see on the card? What else could be on the card? If you went to a foreign country and someone asked you what Iceland was like, what would you say?

Authors: Bláskogaskóli Laugarvatn staff

PATRIOTISM, CREATIVITY

Activity: Building snow trolls

Environment: indoors/outdoors

Duration: 2 x 80 minutes

Resources: paper, crayons, snow, shovel, buckets of different sizes, food colouring, sprayers

Introduction: Look at photos of the Reynisdrangar rock formation located near the settlement of Vík-í-Mýrdal at the western end of the black sand beach. These are rock formations formed in the shape of a sharp spike. Several of these stone fingers rise out of the sea, the tallest rock needle is 66 m high. According to legend, these rocks were originally formed by trolls who wanted to force a passing ship onto land. However, before they could do so, they were caught by the rays of the rising sun, which turned them into rock.



Description: Children are divided into small groups and together they are asked to come up with a short story about trolls that once lived in Iceland. They need to agree on the number and size of trolls in the story. They draw a picture of their story. The whole class then goes outside and builds the characters of the story out of snow. When the children have finished building, they mix food colouring with water in spray cans and spray their creations in different colours. Once everyone is done building, present the stories.

Reflection: Use the card PATRIOTISM for reflection and show the children the Hallgrímskirkja church in Reykjavik on the card. It is shaped like basalt rocks and its design is inspired by Icelandic nature, incorporating aspects of the glaciers, mountains, and lava formations, particularly the hexagonal basalt columns that can be found behind the Svartifoss waterfall in the Skaftafell nature reserve. Talk about the character of Icelandic nature and how it can inspire our own work.

Author: Bláskogaskóli Laugarvatn staff



PATRIOTISM, CURIOSITY

Activity: Runes

Environment: indoors

Duration: 60 minutes

Resources: paper, pencils, runes alphabet chart, string

Introduction: Talk to the children about the origins of the Icelandic nation: When one of the Norwegian kings, Harald Fairhair, began to forcefully subjugate the entire country in the second half of the 9th century, many free rural families abandoned their homes to avoid life in servitude. These Norwegian exiles, with their families, servants and slaves captured on Viking expeditions, settled a desert island in the Atlantic Ocean, Iceland. In the new land, they claimed virgin soil and adopted laws that would ensure their peace and independence from the Norwegian king. In 930 they established the Alting, an all-people assembly, headed by a legislature composed of all the regional chiefs and a lawgiver who recited and explained the laws passed. At the annual Alting, men and women from all over the country met, debated, settled disputes and enjoyed sports and the sharing of stories and news. Anyone could participate.

The Scandinavians worshipped the pagan gods and carved short often ritualistic messages using runes, magical symbols and the first Germanic writing in stone, wood and metal. Runes were used as sacred writing to record important events or to magically protect people or things. The 24 runes, or the older FUTHARK, are thought to be the original runic alphabet, which, according to myth, were revealed to Odin when he was hanging from a tree for nine days and nights, pierced with a spear as a sacrifice to himself. Odin was the highest god of Scandinavia, the son of the giant Bor and the giantess Bestla. He could shape-shift, control the minds of his enemies, prophesy, and cast spells, using his knowledge of the runes.



Description: The children first try to write their name using the ancient runic alphabet. Then, each of them has to think of a simple task for the others (for example, jump on one leg, close your eyes and touch your nose, and so on). They write this task using runes on paper, which they then roll up into a scroll and tie it with string. They place the scrolls in a basket. When everyone is finished, each person chooses a scroll and translates the runic message written on it. Then, one by one, they perform the task they have chosen.

Reflection: What do we know about runes? Why were runes important to Icelanders in the past? What did people believe back then? Can you imagine that a member of your family lived far back in time? In what kind of house did they live? What did they do for a living? Why is it important to be able to imagine how our ancestors lived? If we don't know the answers to some of these questions, we can look them up with the children in books or on the Internet.

Author: Jana Haková



PATRIOTISM, RESPONSIBILITY

Activity: Charles' Bridge

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 45 minutes

Resources: skewers, marshmallows, strings, pictures of Charles Bridge

Introduction: Talk with the children about who was Charles IV, what he did for the Czech lands, what legacy he left and what he built. Show the children a picture of Charles Bridge and talk about why it is important, why it was necessary to connect the banks of the Vltava River when the previous Judith Bridge was taken by flood.

Description: Divide the children into smaller groups. Children are introduced to the events of the 14th century, when the old Judith Bridge was destroyed and there was no bridge over the Vltava River. The groups are asked to build a new bridge which connects the two banks, which can stand on its own over the water and ideally also resembles Charles Bridge, including statues. Use ropes to mark out the river which must not be entered during construction. Set a time limit of 15-30 min (depending on the age of the children) and give each group the building materials: 30 skewers and one packet of marshmallows. Place the groups along the length of the river so that each group has enough space to build or mark out the river in a different place for each group.

Once the time expires, stop the construction. If you see that the children are failing to complete the construction within the time limit, it is possible to add time for all groups during the game. When they have finished, we go through all the groups and check that the task has been completed - that the two banks are connected, that the bridge is stable, and that it includes the sculptures.

Reflection: Ask the children about how the flood (which destroyed Judith's Bridge) relates to the responsibility of the ruler. Who owns the bridges and who is responsible for them? For what are we responsible? What kind of tasks can we handle? What is the reason why the whole country needs someone to look after it all the time, not just the bridges? Who is it? Can we also carry that responsibility?

Author: Pavla Přibylová





PATRIOTISM

Activity: How puppy and kitty celebrated the 28th of October

Environment: indoors

Duration: 45 minutes

Resources: story about puppy and kitty (<https://www.pohadkozem.cz/jak-pejsek-s-kocickou-slavili-28-rijen/>) , paper, skewers, crayons



Description: Read the story about puppy and kitty who celebrated the 28th of October with the children. Talk about the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and the joy of the nation at that time. Standing together in a circle, sing the Czech national anthem with your hand on your heart. The Slovak part of the anthem can be played or reproduced too. Explain the appearance of the Czech flag and the meaning of its colours. Children make Czech flags and add them to their forest houses.

Reflection: Over the card PATRIOTISM, talk about what the children see on the picture. What does a good patriot look like? How do they behave? What do they experience? Are we patriots too?

Author: Martina Štolbová



PERSISTENCE, PATRIOTISM

Activity: Emil Zátopek's run

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 45 minutes

Resources: cones to mark the track

Introduction: Discuss with children who Emil Zátopek was and how he influenced Czech sports and the Olympic landscape. Ask the children what virtues they think Emil Zátopek needed to win 4 Olympic gold medals.



Description: Mark a track with cones. The children must run on the track for a given amount of time. Set the duration of the run according to the children's age, so they have to make some effort and try to overcome their physical limitations and exhaustion for at least a short period of time.

Reflection: Ask the children whether it was easy or difficult for them to keep on and run the track until the end of the time limit. How can one person's perseverance benefit the whole country? What other Czech Olympic athletes do you know? How do Czechs celebrate the performances of Czech athletes? What do other Czech athletes inspire us to do?

Author: Pavla Příbylová



PATRIOTISM

Activities: Our Iceland

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 60 minutes

Resources: 30 double-sided cards - one side with a large number and the other side with a picture of a typical Icelandic symbol with a description (typical animal, plant, landscape, historical building, personality), as many dice as there are teams, pencil, paper, chalk for marking the positions for the teams, list of numbers and associated pictures (to check the correct answers)

Preparation: Place the cards in a designated area (perhaps in the school garden) with the numbers facing up. Use chalk to draw the stations for each team on the ground. A teacher is ready at each station with a list of pictures and numbers.

Description: Divide the kids into teams of 4-6. Each team comes up with a name and writes it in chalk next to their station. Each team gets a dice and once the game starts, they roll 3 times in a row and add up the numbers rolled. The resulting number is the number of the card they need to find in the field. The whole team runs and searches for the card. Once someone finds it, they turn it over and try to remember what picture and caption is on the other side. They don't take the picture with them, but return it to the same place, with the number facing up. Then, they shout the name of their team to let the others know that they must go back to their station. There, the child tells the teacher the number of the card and the caption of the picture they saw. The teacher notes if the answer is correct. Then, the team rolls the dice 3 times again and runs to find the resulting number. The game continues in this manner until the team has found a predetermined number of cards or the time limit for the game has expired.

Variation: Dice rolls can be added, multiplied, subtracted, divided.

Reflection: After the game, assign each child a picture to give a presentation about and tell the class more details on why this person /building/animal/landscape is important in Iceland's history.

Author: Margret Hardardottir





RESPONSIBILITY, COURAGE

Activity: Forefather Czech

Environment: outdoors

Duration: 45 minutes

Resources: blindfolds, depiction of Forefather Czech with his tribe

Introduction: The children look at the pictures of the Forefather Czech standing with his companions on Mount Říp. Talk about what it used to be like when there were no cars, cell phones, shops, and so on. Everybody ate only what they grew themselves. Back then, people had to share their home with domestic animals, which provided them with food and helped them work the land. The legend says that there were two brothers at that time - Czech and Lech. They lived together in a place plagued by wars, so they decided to find a new home for their tribes. On their long journey, they crossed mountains, swamps and rivers. They were at the end of their strengths when Czech spotted a mountain called Říp on the horizon.

Here the exhausted people laid down to rest. While they slept, Czech climbed up the hill. In the morning light he rejoiced at the beauty and fertility of the land on which he stood. He found a new home bearing his name - Czechia. He led his tribe to the top of the hill, and they gasped at the beauty of the landscape below them. In this region they settled. His brother Lech continued his journey. Talk about how brave and responsible both brothers must have been to embark on such a long journey into the unknown. Tell the children that you will try to pretend to be the tribe of that time.

Description: One of the children is Forefather Czech and leads his people to the promised land. The other members of the tribe are blindfolded as a symbol that they do not know where they are going, and they follow Forefather Czech with trust. Line up the blindfolded children and have them grasp the shoulders of the child in front of them. Forefather Czech stands first in line and leads his tribe along the path the teacher shows them. The walk ends on a small hill to create the experience of climbing Mount Říp. There the children take off their blindfolds and look round.

More children can try out the role of Forefather Czech. Include reflection after each round so that children can learn from the experience of previous forefathers and improve their responsibility for their tribe.

Reflection: Ask the children how safe they felt when they were walking. What was Forefather Czech's most important task in leading the group? What responsibility did he have for his tribe? Could blind people make it to the promised land? Why does the Czech nation need courageous and responsible leaders? What would happen if he did not have them?

Author: Jana Haková



PATRIOTISM

Activity: The Czech Republic

Environment: indoors

Duration: 2x 60 minutes

Resources: paper, pencils, crayons

Introduction: Look at pictures from the time of the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. View pictures of the first president T.G.Masaryk on horseback. Talk with the children about the emotions people felt when the free republic was founded.

Description: Together with the children, closely examine the map of the Czech Republic and its current shape and terrain. Point out where the big rivers, major cities and mountain ranges are. The children then draw the outline of our country by hand on a larger piece of paper. It takes a lot of patience and care to make sure the shape of the republic is right. Then they write everything that Czechs can be proud of in the map - personalities, films, sportsmen, art, inventions, and so on.

To explain some details of the Czech statehood, we can use the educational website:
http://www.mujsstat.cz/muj_stat.aspx .

Reflection: Looking at the card PATRIOTISM, discuss what being a patriot means and what is patriotic behaviour.

Author: Pavla Přibyllová

