

peace pledge union

SIX-STEP STORYTELLING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Here's a simple storyline as an example:

A giant threatens a gnome, but the gnome ignores it.
The giant gets together with a team of giants, so as to be even more threatening.
The gnome invites lots of gnomes to a party.
The giants (who don't have parties) prepare for war.
They begin to attack the gnomes.
The gnomes slip away, leaving the party food behind. The giants wait for them to come back, but get bored.
They eat up the food and burst the balloons, and then go away.
The gnomes come back and have another party with even better balloons.
The gnomes say they'll go on doing this until the giants find out that parties are more fun than fighting.

The following steps can be spread over several sessions. They can be applied to other conflict stories which you tell or read. You can also choose suitable items of news.

STEP 1: JOINING IN Invite your child to help you with the story. Why might the giant threaten the gnomes? What are the giants and gnomes like (they don't have to be what the names 'giant' and 'gnome' suggest)? What is the gnomes' party like? How do the giants prepare for battle? What do the giants feel when they find the gnomes have gone? What do they do when they're bored? What would be an even better party?

STEP 2: RUN THAT PAST ME AGAIN Invite the child to retell the story back to you, discussing the details and getting the sequence of events clear.

STEP 3: LET'S IMAGINE Suppose the gnome had made the giant angry in the first place? Suppose the gnomes hadn't disappeared? Suppose the gnomes had invited the giants to their party? How might you persuade the giants that parties are more fun than fighting? Can you imagine people you know behaving like the giants and gnomes?

STEP 4: LET'S PRETEND Take it in turns to be a kind gnome and a cross gnome, a friendly giant and a belligerent one. Act out conversations between gnomes, and between giants, then between gnomes and giants, based first on the story and then on the LET'S IMAGINE discussion.

STEP 5: LET'S THINK When lots of people get together, when is it fun and when is it frightening? Think about being in a war: what would be the worst thing? Planning war, planning a party – what's the difference? Wars and parties are both events which people choose to make happen. How could we persuade people not to choose wars? What's the sensible thing to do when people disagree and feel they want to say so violently – just like we do sometimes? Those giants and gnomes – what would be a fair solution to their quarrel, and how might it be brought about?

STEP 6: OLD STORY, NEW ANGLE Challenge yourself and the child/ ren to retell the story together in other ways. Maybe it's the giants who are partying. Maybe the giants don't like gnome-parties, but want to learn to have fun in their own way (would they invite the gnomes?) Every story has lots of different points of view, and lots of different possible outcomes.

AND

Every story that has a battle in it can be a story without one.

About Peace Pledge Union:

The Peace Pledge Union is the oldest secular pacifist organisation in Britain. Since 1934 it has been campaigning for a warless world. For more information see: www.ppu.org.uk