



## **LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

### **'GIFTS AND OPPORTUNITIES'**

#### **Key Learning Objectives:**

##### **PSHE and Citizenship:**

- To recognise their worth as individuals by identifying positive things about themselves and their achievements, seeing their mistakes, making amends and setting personal goals. (1b)
- To understand that there are different kinds of responsibilities, rights and duties at home, at school and in the community, and that these can sometimes conflict with each other (2d)
- To understand that their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to try to see things from their points of view (4a)

##### **Other Subjects:**

- Pupils should be taught about the legacy of Greek or Roman culture (art, architecture or literature) on later periods in British history, including the present day. (History: Non-statutory KS2)

##### **Vocabulary:**

Celebrity  
Discard  
Dome  
Resolution

## **'Gifts and Opportunities'**

Read the story below while displaying the PPT slides as indicated:

(Slide 5) It was a mystery! The two brothers and their sister had been given identical presents for Christmas by their grandfather. Grandad usually gave them exciting presents, so they were disappointed when they found that they had each been given what appeared to be dull, empty glass domes.

They had picked up their presents on Christmas eve, as they did every year, and (Slide 6) had sat chatting with Grandad for a few minutes enjoying Grandma's mince pies. Before long they had started moaning about how unfair it was that some children had more pocket money than they were given, and how they didn't have the latest gadgets that their friends had. (Slide 7) As grown-ups often do, Grandad asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up. They answered: 'to be a celebrity' or 'to be famous of course'. (Slide 8) However, when he asked them what they hoped to become famous for, they couldn't give a convincing answer!

Now, on the day after Boxing Day, they were on their way to thank him for their disappointing presents. How were they going to sound pleased? They discussed what each of them might say.

(Slide 9) When Grandpa opened the door they all took turns to say their piece. Then Grandpa asked a strange question. (Slide 10) 'What have you done with the wrapping?' The children told him that all the wrapping had been thrown in the recycling bin.

'Oh!' said Grandpa. 'From the way you were talking about the celebrities you admire the other day, you appeared to value their wrapping – their superficial appearance - above all else. In fact I didn't hear you mention anything about them that I would consider worthy of your admiration. I am very pleased that you didn't value my packaging over the present inside!'

At this point one of the brothers plucked up the courage to ask Grandpa why he had given them the glass domes. 'They make nice paper weights, but they aren't like the presents you usually choose for us.'

'Ah!' said Grandad, 'I don't think you have discovered the secret of my presents yet. You need to give them a really good shake.'

**(Slide 11)** Luckily the little girl had brought her dome with her, in her bag. She took it out and shook it. As she did so, it filled with stars of many colours. Grandad told them that while the domes represented their lives, the stars represented their gifts and opportunities: their many talents, the love and support of their families and friends, the chance to give to others and the prospect of happiness.

'Now' he said, 'I want you to give your glass dome an even more vigorous shake.'

**(Slide 12)** 'What do you see?'

'A two headed person!' they shouted.

'Yes,' said Grandad, 'that is a hologram of Janus. In ancient times the Romans believed in a two faced god who could see into the past with one face and look into the future with the other. **(Slide 13)** Amongst other things Janus was the god of new beginnings, and he symbolised young people's growth to adulthood.'

'Oh I remember now,' said one of the brothers, 'the Romans named the month of January after Janus!'

'That's right,' said Grandad. 'The God Janus reminded the Romans of the benefit of learning from the past – from our mistakes as well as successes. He also reminded them to set goals for the future. I gave each of you a globe to remind you of the gifts you have, but it is up to you how you make the most of your opportunities. Only you can decide on your goals, and seek the means of their achievement. You will find that it is also the pathway to a worthwhile life. **(Slide 14)** The happiest people don't **have** the best of everything. They **make** the best of everything.'

'This is the right time of the year for thinking about goals!' said the other brother. 'The new year is the time for making resolutions!'

'Well, yes,' said Grandad, 'you can, of course, set goals at any time, but I hope that your glass domes will remind you every new year to set yourselves some truly worthwhile goals for the year ahead. That is the path to happiness.' (Slide 15)

'I'd like you to remember too, how you discarded the wrapping.' said Grandad (Slide 16) '**Life** is the gift; how famous we are, the money we have and our possessions are the **wrapping**. The wrapping is just the outer coating of our Life. It really is unimportant!'

## **Discussion.**

What makes people happy?

Discuss with the children how psychologists (*eg Martin Seligman*) have found that money doesn't buy much happiness unless it's used in certain ways. Once people have enough money to comfortably feed, clothe, and house themselves, having more money - even a lot more money - makes them only a little bit happier.

They have found that spending money on others actually makes us happier than spending it on ourselves.

Human beings seem happiest when they have:

1. *Pleasure* (enjoying tasty food, a warm bath etc.),
2. *Engagement* (when they are absorbed by an enjoyable yet challenging activity),
3. *Relationships* (strong social ties),
4. *Meaning* (a perceived quest or belonging to something bigger)
5. *Accomplishments* (sense of achievement from reaching tangible goals).

Ask the children to get into pairs. Ask one of them to talk to the other about whether they feel happy today and if so why. If they don't feel

happy, they could explain why not (if they wish to do so). After the two minutes is up the second partner gets the same opportunity to talk about their happiness today.

Compile the children's thoughts, illustrated with pictures, into a class booklet: 'Happiness is ...'.

## **Activity 1.**

### Role models

Ask the children to think of someone they truly admire. This could be a famous person in the news/history, a family member, or a friend.

Keeping the names of their role models to themselves, ask the children to think about /jot down words that describe the person.

Ask them to share their words, while a scribe writes them on the whiteboard.

How many of the words are the same or similar? Can you group them – for instance in terms of character, abilities, personal qualities, strength/bravery?

Ask the children to make an artwork or collage using the words they like the best.

## **Activity 2.**

### New Year's Resolutions

Give each child a copy of 'My Resolutions' (below).

Discuss how, in order for something to be a goal:

- It has to be important to you, personally, though it might involve making life better for others.
- It has to be within your power to make it happen through your own actions.

- It has to be ambitious, yet something that you have a reasonable chance of achieving.

Talk about how the children need to work to their strengths when setting their goals, and take into account their weaknesses when considering the support they will need.

When the charts are complete ask the children to discuss them with a response partner. Are their goals ambitious yet achievable, unrealistic, sufficiently demanding?

Re-visit the goals at the end of the half-term/term/year. Highlight the goals that have been partly achieved in yellow, and those that have been fully achieved in green.

Celebrate!!

### **Activity 3.**

#### Visualising our goals

Ask the children to lie on the floor, if possible. If not ask them to sit comfortably on their chairs, and to relax. Play some relaxing music at low volume (e.g. Enya).

In a soothing voice ask the children to imagine they are lying on a golden beach or under a shady tree. Ask them to relax their toes, then their ankles, their knees, their tummies etc. until their whole body has lost all tension.

Now ask them to visualise themselves having achieved their most important goal.

Gradually 'bring them back' to the real world.

Talk about how visualising is almost as important as physically doing something, because the brain is not good at distinguishing between the real and the imaginary. It helps you to believe in your goals.

Tell them that if we don't lose sight of our goals, and wade our way through the obstacles, there isn't a goal which can't be achieved.

*'Reach high, for stars lie hidden in you. Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal.'*

— Rabindranath Tagore

#### **Activity 4.**

##### Janus

In ancient Roman religion **Janus** was the god of beginnings and transitions, gates, doorways, endings and time. Janus was worshipped at the beginning of planting times and the harvest, as well as at marriages, deaths and other beginnings.

January 1<sup>st</sup> was consecrated to Janus since it was the first day of the New Year and the month of Janus. The Romans believed that the beginning of anything was an omen for the whole, so on New Year's Day it was customary to exchange good wishes. People gave dates, figs and honey as a token of goodwill and made gifts of coins. Cakes were offered to the god and burnt on the altar.

Ask the children to research the internet to find the names of the Roman Gods and complete the sheet 'Roman Gods' below.

**Answers:** 1.Jupiter 2.Diana 3.Apollo 4.Venus 5.Minerva 6.Neptune 7.Ceres 8.Vulcan 9.Juno 10.Mercury 11.Vesta 12.Mars.



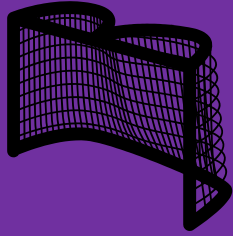
# ROMAN GODS



Name of God	Description
1.	He was the master of the gods and the Most important god of the Romans. In his hand he held thunderbolts which he hurled from the sky.
2.	She was the goddess of hunting and also goddess of the Moon.
3.	He was the god of music, healing, light, and truth. He moved the sun across the sky
4.	She was the goddess of love and beauty.
5.	She was the goddess of wisdom, learning, art crafts and industry. Her symbol was the owl.
6.	He was the powerful god of the sea. His symbol was the trident.
7.	She was the goddess of the harvest, always shown carrying a bundle of grain.
8.	He was the blacksmith of the gods and a god of the Under-world. If he stoked his furness too hard, volcanoes erupted. He was the god of blacksmiths and volcanoes
9.	She was the wife of Jupiter, the goddess of women and fertility. Her symbols were a pomegranate and a peacock.
10.	He was the messenger of the gods. The wings on his helmet and sandals allowed him to travel very quickly to wherever he might be sent He was the god of travellers and tradesmen.
11.	She was the goddess of the heart and home and so very important to the Romans. A flame was always kept burning in her temple.
12.	He was the god of war, and the strongest and most fearsome god, apart from Jupiter.



# My Resolutions



Goals I'm going for

Things I need to learn or find out about

Actions I need to take

People who can help me

Friends and Family

Things I can do to help others

School work

Health & Hobbies

Signed:

Date: