

PEACE EDUCATION NETWORK

Teach Peace Pack

Assembly: We all live under the same blue sky



Aim: to explore the issue of armed drones through stories from two children who want to fly a kite.

Planning/Preparation: You will need:

- Two cut-out kite shapes
- Story of Aymel (below) stuck to the reverse of a kite shape
- Story of Anita (below) stuck to the reverse of the other kite shape
- Large kite and long string
- Paper for wishes (children will need pens)

A PowerPoint presentation is also available to tell the story: see the Peace Education website at www.peace-education.org.uk.

With a small enough group the wishes can be tied to the string on the way out of the assembly. It may be preferable with a large group to collect the wishes and make a display of Aymel's kite, his story and the wishes.

*This is a useful assembly for upper primary/lower secondary. It is drawn from the resource 'Fly Kites Not Drones', available at: www.FlyKitesNotDrones.org. It touches on the true story of Aymel, a young boy whose father was killed in a drone strike. If you are working with children who have experienced war or violent conflict see www.flykitesnotdrones.org for advice.

1 Introduction

Today I want to talk about kites... has anyone ever flown a kite? ... Tell me about it...

A kite in the sky is a beautiful image wherever you are. Whether pieced together from bin bags and string, or manufactured with high-tech fibres, when we see a kite fly, part of us flies with it. But the lives of people holding the string can be very different.

I have two kites here. Can I have two volunteers to hold them for me please?

Two children (confident readers preferably) are selected to hold the kites. Ask them to stand with the front of the kite facing the audience and the reverse – with the story – facing towards them.

One of these kites belongs to a girl called Anita who is from this country. Which of you has Anita's kite? And the other kite belongs to a boy called Aymel. [Name of person holding Anita's kite] can tell us a bit about Anita...

2 Anita's story [Child reads Anita's story]

I live in a large town in England. There are some hills a short drive from where I live and I often visit there with my parents and my little brother Jaydon.

It is always very windy on the hills. When Jaydon was little I used to worry he would blow away!

The hills are a brilliant place for flying kites and every time we go for a walk there I take my kite with me. Lots of people of all ages go there to fly kites.

Last summer I had my birthday party on the hills with my friends. There was a picnic and some games but we spent most of the time flying our kites. My mum had got me a big yellow kite and had even written my name on it. The weather was perfect – and very windy – and we played for hours, trying new tricks and stunts as our kites soared through the air. It was brilliant!

Jaydon's nearly old enough to fly a kite now, so I'm going to teach him.

For Anita, like for many of you, flying kites is something fun, something she does with her family or friends, something that she enjoys and that makes her happy.

The same is true for Aymel. But for him the story isn't all happy. [Name] can you tell us about Aymel please...

3 Aymel's story [Child reads Aymel's story]

I live in Dadal, a town in Afghanistan. You may have heard of my country because of the war and fighting here in recent years. I wish you could hear about all the good things in my country and the wonderful people who live here.

I fly my kite in my town. I have an old kite that my uncle gave to me before he went to the city to study. He is going to be an engineer!

I love my kite, it flies so high! As I make it soar, dive, and rise again, I feel like I can fly over the mountains!

My uncle told me that I have to be careful when I am flying my kite, and that if I see a red and green light in the sky I must go home. The lights might be a drone and drones are dangerous. They are so high in the sky. And they drop bombs. One of these drones killed my dad and he was just a farmer. He never even carried a gun, but the drone couldn't tell the difference. I was only three when it happened.

We send wishes up with our kites. At New Year – which we celebrate on the 21st of March – everybody in the town goes out to fly kites together. It is an Afghan tradition. I know I'll see my dad again one day, so my wish is always the same: that there will be peace and I can fly kites with my friends without feeling afraid.

4 The rights of a child

When we are at leisure – playing football or computer games – when Aymel is flying his kite, you and he are exercising your human rights; the universal right of children and young people to play ('Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities', Article 31, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

For Aymel, living in Afghanistan, kite flying is very important. It is part of Afghan culture. On special occasions like New Year lots of people fly kites together in celebration.

But good kite-flying weather is also the weather in which drones – those machines that Aymel is so scared of – fly well. When Aymel flies his kite he is always worried that a drone is there, even if he can't see it, and playtime is over. He must go home where it is safer.

5 Conclusion

In Aymel's story we heard him speak about how, on special occasions, he likes to send a wish up with his kite. What would our wish be today? For Aymel... for children whose lives are affected by war and violence... for the world?

Write your wish on the paper and we will add it to Aymel's kite string and let us wish with him for peace.

Follow up activities/resources:

- For workshop plans which help children learn more about human rights and armed drones, plus kite making instructions, 'Fly Kites Not Drones: We all live under the same blue sky' (£5 plus p&p). Copies available from the Quaker Centre Book Shop, email quakercentre@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1030, or order online from www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop.
- For videos, ideas and more resources see www.flykitesnotdrones.org.
- Read 'The Kites are Flying!' by Michael Morpurgo, in which Said, a Palestinian boy who never speaks, makes kites to fly over the wall near his home.
- For another assembly about kites, and all living under the same blue sky, see www.assemblies.org.uk/sec/1547/reach-for-the-stars-and-your-kite.