

# PEACE EDUCATION NETWORK

## Teach Peace Pack

### Assembly: Nonviolence in action: Mama Zepreta's house



**Aim:** to explore positive ways of challenging injustice through nonviolent means.

**Preparation:** you may want to rehearse mimes for the story beforehand. A PowerPoint presentation is also available to tell the story: see the Peace Education Network website at [www.peace-education.org.uk](http://www.peace-education.org.uk).

#### 1 Introduction: a true story about injustice

Explain that you are going to tell a true story about injustice (when something is really unfair).

First of all, ask the children to think about a time when they felt something was unfair. Maybe they felt they weren't listened to, or they had been treated unfairly. How did it make them feel?

#### 2 Play script

This story is about a woman who was treated unfairly and how she and her neighbours reacted. Some children will be able to help tell the story by miming what they hear (miming means acting silently). Each new number can prompt new mimes. The teacher (or a student) can act as the narrator, reading the following, accompanied by the mime.

1. Here's Mama Zepreta, a grandmother from Kenya (introduce a child as Mama Zepreta).
2. Here is her house... (children can act as the walls, with their arms outstretched as the roof)
3. ...and her big family – her children and their children (more children appear).
4. But a Big Man wanted the house (the child playing him should stand with arms folded).
5. The Big Man sent men to take the house away from Mama Zepreta. What could she do? Why do you think the Big Man wanted the land?
6. The men took away the house and knocked it down (the house falls down and Mama Zepreta's family go back to their seats). The Big Man was going to use the land for himself.
7. Mama Zepreta went to the Village Chief, but he held up his hands. He was too scared to help.
8. She went to the District Commissioner, but he shook his head. He wouldn't help either!
9. Then Mama Zepreta's neighbour decided to help. Mama Zepreta wasn't alone anymore.
10. They went to see the Big Man himself, but he wouldn't see Mama Zepreta (the Big Man turns his back). Instead, he sent her threatening text messages! She and her friend were very scared.
11. They met a court judge, who agreed it was wrong of the Big Man to take her house. The judge gave her papers to say the law was on Mama Zepreta's side (they can show the Big Man the paper), but still the Big Man would not listen.
12. People all over the village were angry and afraid for their own homes.
13. Mama Zepreta and her friend went into the village centre. They danced and people joined in with them. They decided to help Mama Zepreta. What might the people from the village do?

14. The villagers decided to march to her land and started rebuilding her house. They decided that they would do this 'nonviolently'. What do you think it means to be nonviolent? It means not fighting or hurting people, but it does not mean giving up.
15. Before long, the police arrived. These police worked for the Big Man, so they always did what he said. They said "Get off the land!" They threatened the villagers with guns and threw tear gas, which made the people's eyes burn and made them cough.

*How do you think Mama Zepreta and the villagers felt? What might they do? Some of them did want to fight the police. What would have been the results of fighting? How do you think the police felt?*

16. For a long time the police and the villagers were on Mama Zepreta's land, facing each other. Although they were very angry, the people decided that they would remain nonviolent. The villagers talked to the police and asked them if they really wanted to be part of something as unfair as stealing a grandmother's home.
17. Finally, the police left. The villagers could hardly believe it, but they finished rebuilding the house. Mama Zepreta had her home back. The village celebrated their victory by dancing and cheering.

### 3 Discuss the story.

Thank all the actors. Mama Zepreta's story is about nonviolence. What would have happened if they had been violent? Explore this question persistently: "And *then* what would have happened?" Elicit the idea that violence often leads to more violence.

### 4 Conclusion

Being nonviolent doesn't mean giving up; it means standing up. Has anyone else ever stood up for themselves or for someone else without being violent? It can be scary, can't it? But some of the biggest changes in history have been made by nonviolent people working together. Nonviolent campaigns helped get the vote for women in Britain, and were used by Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States and by people campaigning for justice in South Africa. Nonviolence helped

India win its freedom from the British Empire and stopped Russia being taken over by its army in 1991. In fact, nonviolence is twice as likely to succeed as violence in changing things for the better.

Mahatma Gandhi said: "Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man."

Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "At the centre of nonviolence stands the principle of love."

### Follow up activities

- Classes can discuss different situations in and out of school that could lead to violence. Encourage the children to think of creative, nonviolent ways of resolving those problems without fighting. Link this to pupil-voice in the school.
- Explore storybooks about nonviolence such as *The Bus Ride* by William Miller, based on the story of Rosa Parks. For more ideas see the Facing History and Ourselves website at [www.facinghistory.org/guide-literature-young-children](http://www.facinghistory.org/guide-literature-young-children).
- Ask the children to research the stories of Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr. or the women's suffrage movement.
- Explore examples of successful nonviolent actions with the Nonviolence works resource from the Fellowship of Reconciliation: go to [www.for.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Nonviolence-Works.pdf](http://www.for.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Nonviolence-Works.pdf).