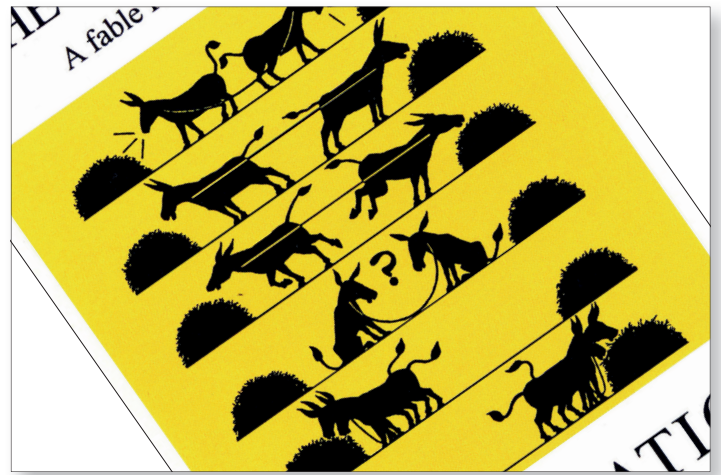


# PEACE EDUCATION NETWORK

## Teach Peace Pack

### Assembly: Conflict resolution: A tale of two mules



**Aim:** to show that co-operation is better than conflict.

**Planning/Preparation:** you may find it useful to have for the assembly:

2 mule masks  
(from: [www.peace-education.org.uk](http://www.peace-education.org.uk))  
A frisbee and a football  
A length of rope/cord  
2 cardboard boxes.

#### 1 Introduction: ask for two volunteers

Explain that they won't have to speak, but might need to do a bit of acting. (*Give each of the two students a mule mask and one end of the rope/cord, making sure they know they cannot let go of it. Explain you are going to tell a story, and you would like them to act it out as you go along.*)

#### 2 Tell the following story:

Once upon a time there were two mules. They were tied together in the farmyard, and they were very hungry. (Encourage your actors to mime).

Then, the farmer left two boxes of food in the yard for them: one for the first mule (position on the left of the stage) and one for the other mule (position on the right of the stage).

Each mule saw that the food had been left, but they were still tied together. They each tried to reach their food, but they couldn't. They were just as strong as each other, so however hard they pulled on their rope, they would never get the food.

Feeling tired and out of breath, they sat down next to each other, even hungrier than before.

Explain that at this point it's a 'lose-lose' situation.

Neither of the mules has got what he/she needs.

#### 3 What can the mules do?

*Ask the children for suggestions about what the mules could do.* [Look for ideas about working together, cooperating to eat together from one box first and then the next].

#### 4 Continue the story...

Then the mules started to talk to each other, and they came up with an idea that would help them both get food. They went together to the first mule's food and shared it, never pulling on the rope. Once that food was gone, they went to the other mule's food and shared all of that. They both got enough food and the sat down happily. They had found a 'win-win' solution.

#### 5 Different endings

'Win-win' solutions made both mules feel happy. But this story mightn't have had a happy ending. How could it have ended in a less happy way? *Ask the children for suggestions.* Look for ideas such as...

- The mules could have fought over the food and got hurt – 'lose-lose'
- One mule might have bullied the other one and taken all the food – a 'win-lose'
- They could have pulled so hard that it hurt them – another 'lose-lose'

There was a point in the middle of our story when the mules did something that helped them solve their problem. *Did anyone notice what this was?* By stopping and thinking, and then talking and listening, they found a win-win idea.

#### 6 Conflict

Explain that disagreements, or conflicts, happen

all the time. What matters is how we handle them. Instead of falling out and arguing we can, like the mules, work together to find a solution that everybody is happy with. How do we do this?

*Ask the children what the mules had to do to get to their 'win-win' solution.* [Look for answers like stop and think, cooperate, listen to each other, think about each other's needs....] So now we know how to try to reach 'win-win' solutions, let's see if we can solve this problem for Sam and Ali (or use the names of the two students who volunteer). Ask for two more volunteers. Give one a football and one a Frisbee. Explain the situation:

*Sam really wants to play Frisbee  
Ali really wants to play basketball.  
But they want to play together.*

*Ask the children what Sam and Ali could do about their problem that would be a 'win-win'?* [Look for answers such as...]

- Agree to split their time, playing a bit of basketball and a bit of Frisbee
- Agree to play one now, and the other tomorrow
- Invent a new sport – you could even ask your volunteers to demonstrate a solution, such as basketfrisbee!

## 7 'Win-win' solutions

These ideas are all what we call 'win-win' solutions. When we get into a disagreement, or conflict, we often think that for the other person to win, we must lose. So we focus only on winning. We pull really hard in our own direction, like the mules before they sat down to think. But even if we end up winning, we've sometimes hurt the feelings of the other person, or damaged the friendship.

## 8 Conclusion

*So next time you get into a disagreement, what should you do?* Remember the tale of the two mules. Rather than pull in different directions, take the time to stop and think. See if you can cooperate and find a 'win-win' solution.

## Follow up activities/resources:

- Introduce Peer Mediation – conflict resolution for young people by young people – to your school. To find out about training and more information contact the Peer Mediation Network:  
[www.peermediationnetwork.org.uk](http://www.peermediationnetwork.org.uk)

- Display and use in your classroom *The Two Mules* poster.

Explore the nature of conflict with children or all-age groups using *Once Upon a Conflict: A fairy-tale manual of conflict resolution* by Tom Leimdorfer, 2014. This book uses familiar stories to help readers explore the nature of conflict and find ways to handle it constructively.

Both are available from the Quaker Centre: 020 7663 1030 or email [quakercentre@quaker.org.uk](mailto:quakercentre@quaker.org.uk).

- As a class, use circle time as a regular space to safely share feelings and problems children experience (naming no names), inviting the group to suggest solutions using the phrase "would it help if..." For more on using circles go to: [www.peacemakers.org.uk](http://www.peacemakers.org.uk)
- See the Woodcraft Folk's 'Pioneer Peace Pack activity 2 – Conflict Resolution': <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/pioneer-peace-pack-activity-2-conflict-resolution> for materials and activities (aimed at children aged 10–12).