

Responding to the Japan Earthquake: Two ideas

Dear Friend,

I taught in Japan many years ago and would like to share a couple of ideas of things that children in our schools could do in response to the terrible suffering there now. I found them through a Japan network I am connected to. With thanks,
Bob Bowie

1. Write Messages to Children in Japan

Children can help support survivors of the Tohoku Pacific Earthquake by sending heartfelt messages to schools through the Japan Society. In response to the many kind teachers who have come forward with the desire to help, the Japan Society Education Programme invites schools in the United Kingdom to send messages of support to schools in the affected area, particularly Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima prefectures.

Classes can create a card or write a letter to support the children whose lives have been most affected by the devastating events. Items can be sent directly to the Japan Society which will then translate and distribute the messages to schools in April at the start of Japan's new school year.

Post to:

Education Programme, The Japan Society, Swire House, 59 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6AJ.

Please include your school address, details of the contact teacher and the student year group so that the education team can forward messages to the most appropriate schools.

For more about the Japan Society - <http://www.japansociety.org.uk/>

The Japan Society, established in 1891, is a charity and the leading independent body in the UK dedicated to the enhancement of the British-Japanese relationship. The Schools Education Programme provides educational resources, teaching materials, school visits, grants, and workshop based training as well as school links partner finding services and support. The Japan Society supports over 100 British school links with Japan through various means including translation services for teachers and a bilingual website for students, Japan-UK LIVE!

2. Make 1000 Cranes for Japan

Sadako Sasaki

Do you know the (true) story of the Japanese schoolgirl Sadako Sasaki who set herself the target of folding 1000 cranes while she was suffering from terminal leukaemia contracted as a result of the Hiroshima bomb?

There's a lot of information about her story, and the significance of cranes in Japan on Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thousand_origami_cranes and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadako_Sasaki. To this day Japanese schoolchildren learn her story and many schools make chains of cranes and travel to Hiroshima Peace Park to leave the chains at the Children's Memorial. It means that 1000 origami cranes is now closely linked not only with the wish for long life and peace, but also with Japanese children and lastly with the effects of nuclear radiation.

What you can do

Share with your pupils the story of Sadako Sasaki and ask them if they would like to show their support for the people of Japan by forming a chain of 1000 origami cranes and donating some money to one of the relief funds such as the Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/Donate-Now/Make-a-single-donation/Japan-Tsunami-Appeal>

or via the Japan Society:

<http://www.japansociety.org.uk/earthquake/>

Children, staff or parents can donate for a piece of paper to make a crane or for a pre-prepared crane. This chain could then be displayed in school and used as a focus for thoughts and/or prayers for Japan.