The programme is an initiative of the National Council for the Elderly taken during 1993 European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations. Implicit in the pack is the promotion of the themes of the Year, which are lasting themes and go beyond the Year itself.
Bearing Fruit

A programme for primary schools about being young and growing old.

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Some preparation is necessary
Foreword by Minister for Education

Dear Students and Teachers,

1993, the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations is, I believe, an important initiative in increasing awareness and understanding between the younger and older generations of our society.

Older and younger people have a lot to learn and share with one another and this year provides an ideal opportunity for both young and old to discover and explore the many challenges facing them as citizens of our community.

I congratulate the National Council for the Elderly for publishing this excellent Bearing Fruit programme. Its purpose is to promote positive attitudes to ageing and to older people in a real and practical way, through the classroom. I am sure that it will achieve its aim and assist the younger and older generations deepen their mutual respect and sense of solidarity.

Misunderstandings based on lack of knowledge can sometimes create barriers between generations. I believe that the Bearing Fruit programme will encourage young people to appreciate the contribution which the oldest generation has made and continues to make to our society.

I wish the programme every success.

[Niamh Bhreathnach TD
Minister for Education]
Preface

Bearing Fruit is a programme of experiential learning specifically designed for use by teachers of 9-12 year olds in primary school. It aims to promote solidarity between young and old, by facilitating an exploration on how young people feel about their own ageing and about older people, and by offering information of an accurate and reflective nature on the world of the over-sixties. A similar programme in Due Season is also available for post-primary schools.

The programme is an initiative of the National Council for the Elderly taken during 1993 European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations. It has been financially supported by the Irish Co-ordinating Committee of the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations and by the Commission of the European Communities. Implicit in the pack is the promotion of the themes of the Year - the positive contribution of older people, all ages together and meeting the challenge of older age - which are lasting themes and go beyond the Year itself.

The programme consists of ten units. It is designed to run chronologically over a number of weeks, or within one school term. But, bearing in mind the realities of school life, each unit is complete in itself, thereby allowing teachers to use it flexibly, according to their needs. Working through each unit would take approximately one hour, and a key exercise(s) has been identified in each unit which would take approximately half an hour to complete.

Programme materials include handouts which need to be photocopied. Working the programme will create class-generated materials which could be displayed around the classroom. Finally, the material could form the basis of a school exhibition when the project is complete.

The programme provides a variety of learning methods - small discussion groups, quizzes, role play, games and projects - and more. Learning is most effective when it is challenging, interactive and fun. The aim in all units is to be participative. The programme seeks to build on the pupil’s own knowledge of and attitudes to older people and ageing, to challenge negative attitudes, and to affirm and develop those that are positive.

In preparing and writing the programme the National Council for the Elderly wishes to acknowledge the help and support given by Catherine Rose, National Co-ordinator of The European Year, Michael Gorman, of the Irish Association of Older People, Father Brian Power, former Council member and social researcher, and Sibhain Cuskey, educationalist. The Council wishes also to mention Age & Opportunity and The Irish Times who provided the photographs printed on pages 12 and 13. Finally the Council wishes to thank its Secretary, Bob Carroll and Projects Officer, Trish Whelan for their contributions to the establishment, production and publication of the programme.

Michael White
Chairman
National Council for the Elderly
Unit 1

How old is old?

Being old is always 15 years older than I am now.

About this unit:

This unit introduces the subject of age and ageing. It has 3 sections. Section A (group exercise) opens up the subject. In section B (individual exercise) each pupil create(s) a picture of an old person. In section C (group exercise), the group responds to a selection of photographs which illustrate the diversity of older people.

Section A is the key exercise in this unit.

Aims:

- Provide an atmosphere and a space in which pupils can begin to discover their views and feelings on growing old and old people.
- Receive an accurate overview on the life of the elderly population in Ireland today.
- Learn that being old is part of a continuum of life and not a separate state.
- Realise that old age stretches from the 60s to the 90s and covers widely varying experiences.
- See that older people are individuals, each different from the other.

Resources:

Class resources needed are blackboard or flipchart, drawing paper and colouring materials. To complete section C, the handout on pages 12 and 13 needs to be photocopied for each pupil.
Alternatively, pupils are asked to write five good things and five bad things about being old, and five good and bad things about being young. A number of pupils are selected to read out what they have written, these are recorded on the board/chart, and pupils are invited to agree or disagree.

Alternatively, write the words old age or growing old or old people on blackboard or flipchart and ask for word associations with these - what words best describe growing old / old people? What do we automatically think of when we think of growing old?

It may be necessary to focus the discussion by asking more specific questions such as:

- Where do old people live?
- When does old age begin?
- How different might someone be at 55 and 65?
- Do over 60s need to be looked after in a special way? If so, in what way?
- Do all older people need looking after, or only some?
- Could an old person travel a distance on their own?
- Do older people get ill more often than younger people? Why?
- Are most old people poor? If so why?
- Do they need less money to live on than younger people? If so, why?

It could be challenging to mix the personal with the general. Who will care for you when you are old? Are you looking forward to growing old? If so, why so? If not, why not?

Some possible responses from pupils:

It is likely that pupils - in so far as they have ever thought about older people and growing old - have a negative view of ageing. Research indicates that many young people in Ireland today are not in regular daily contact with an old person, and so their view of elderly people is vague and lacks positivitiy. Younger people may also perceive elderly people as being critical of them, which could cause resentment.

Having listened to a wide variety of opinions and points of view it would be important to make the following general points.

1. Attitudes to ageing are personal and moveable. To a 6 year old a 10 year old could be regarded as old, strong, powerful. To 10 year olds, however, do not necessarily see themselves in that light, compared to say, a 15 year old, who may in turn feel they have to wait until they are 21 before they have the independence they want.

2. We are all growing older all the time, our bodies both ageing and developing, our minds maturing and developing, our ideas and attitudes forming and developing, as we move from childhood to adulthood to middle age and old age.

3. Generally speaking, society has decided that people move into old age once they hit their 60s. But the maturing, the learning and the developing does not stop just because we reach a certain date on the calendar.

In fact:

- 1 in 9 of all people in Ireland is over 65.
- 1 in 5 of all people over 65 live alone.
- 1 in 5 people over 65 live alone.
- Living alone is not necessarily a problem, and many old people lead happy, independent and useful lives on their own.
- Some old people are lonely. Research has shown that many would appreciate and enjoy visits from family, friends and neighbours of all ages.
- 1 in 6 old people receive informal care at home - from a family member or neighbour and 2 in 3 of these old people are aged 75 or over.
- Only 1 in 22 old people is in a geriatric hospital (hospital for old people) or in a nursing home.
- 3 in 4 people in this long stay care are over 75 years of age.
- At any given time, a further 1 in 29 is in hospital temporarily through physical or mental illness.
- We are all living longer. In 1925, the average life expectancy for a man was 57, for a woman 61. Today life expectancy at birth is 74 years for a man and 77 years for a woman.
- Years ago, being old meant being poor for many. Today most old people get a pension from the government and many get a pension from their employer when they leave work.
- A man and a woman qualify for an old age pension when they reach the age of 66. The 1993 non-contributory old age pension for a single man or woman is €20. A married couple get €40.
- But many old people are still among the poorest in the country. Most people agree that it is difficult to make ends meet on a pension. Almost 120,000 people plus dependants claim the basic non-contributory old age pension in 1990.

Probably the most effective way of giving this information is to space it, leaving time for pupils to absorb and respond as they wish. Also, it may be helpful to precis some facts with a question, e.g., "How many people over 65 do you think live on their own?" and then give the answer.

Section B. Creating an image (individual exercise, 20 minutes)

Each pupil is asked to draw and colour a picture of an old person, directed alone or with partners. If possible this should be on an A3 page for maximum impact and visibility.

Allow 10-15 minutes for the drawing. Then invite a number of pupils to show what they have done and why. Invite the class to respond.

Some questions worth asking:

- What is the subject shown as happy or sad?
- What is the setting? - is it indoors, for example, are we assuming that older people never go out?
- Is the image depicted one of weakness or strength?
- What is the subject doing - moving passively, resting and relaxing, or being busy?

Allow time for discussion on these and any other points.

Section C. Old Age - Many images (group exercise, 10 minutes)

The 8 photographs of older people (printed overhead) are now passed round to individuals, or displayed to the whole group.

Some questions worth asking:

What emotions do these photographs convey?
What atmosphere do they create?
Do they show any facet of being old not previously realised?
Conclude the unit by allowing the group to respond to the photographs.
Unit 1

old age - many images
Unit 2

About this unit:
This unit examines the kind of images young people receive of older people through media. It has four sections. Section A (group exercise) discovers what knowledge pupils have of well-known older people. Section B (group exercise) explores how attitudes are formed. Section C (individual or group exercise) considers how older people are portrayed in fact/fiction/news/TV/drama/advertising, and section D (group exercise) reflects on the findings and their implications.

Section C and D are the key exercises in this unit.

Resources:
Class resources needed are blackboard or flipchart. To complete section C, the handout ‘Measuring The Messages’ on pages 18 and 19 needs to be photocopied for each pupil or small group.

Aims:
• Provide a forum to explore a pupil’s eye view of older people as presented through mass media.
• Look at how attitudes are formed.
• Discuss if media portrayal of older people is fair and accurate.
• Examine the implications of any imbalance.
**Unit 2**

Section A. Who do we know? (group exercise, 10 minutes)

Begin by finding out what knowledge the group has of older, well-known people. Ask for names of people over 60, famous in fact or in fiction. Write the names on board/chart and see how much is known about each person.

Trigger questions to jog the memory - do you know any kings or queens, world leaders, writers, musicians, actors, actresses, or sports stars who are over 60?

Having listed all the names suggested by the group, you could suggest others to them such as:

**Mother Teresa**: Born in 1910 and still works with the poorest of the poor all over the world.

**Margaret Thatcher**: Born in 1925, was the first female Prime Minister of Britain. Today, Baroness Thatcher is still a force to be reckoned with.

**Jack Charlton**: In his early 60s, he is the uncrowned king of Irish soccer. He was on the British World Cup winning team in 1966 and now passes on his skills.

**Nelson Mandela**: Released after 27 years in prison at the age of 72. His crime was to have fought for the rights of black people in South Africa. Born in 1918, he is the leader of the African National Congress.

**Alternatively**, you could make a statement about each of the people mentioned above and have the group guess the identity. (Example: Mother Teresa’s statement: “I work with poor people all over the world.”)

**Alternatively**, pupils can take turns to ask the questions, using the given personalities, or thinking up their own.

**Alternatively**, take half the class and devise, ‘I am local. Who am I?’, allowing the remainder of the class to guess who the local older personality is.

The aim of the game is to have some fun. There is an underlying learning too in realising that people continue to contribute significantly to the world into old age. Thirdly, it will be instructive to see the extent of knowledge or interest in famous older people.

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Section B. How do you know what you know? (group exercise, 10 minutes)

Begin with a simple question - “how do you get your ideas about things?” Allow the class to give their own responses and write these up on board/chart.

Respond with a definitive list which includes:
- parents
- brothers/sisters
- grandparents
- extended family
- neighbourhood
- school friends
- teacher
- religion
- television
- radio
- newspapers
- films
- books
- schooltext
- comics
- advertising

Allow some discussion on these headings. The group may like to number them in order of importance. Who thinks television is the most important opinion-maker? Who thinks they get their ideas from their family? Take a show of hands.

---

Section C. Questionnaire: Measuring the Messages (individual or group exercise, 20 minutes)

This exercise examines how old people are portrayed in public media - television, newspapers, advertising, books, films - as perceived by the group. Distribute the questionnaire (printed overhead) and allow the class to fill in answers either individually or in small groups. If groups, divide the class into groups of 4-5 and appoint someone to write down the main comments. Allow 10 minutes for group discussion and re-form as one group to listen to the findings of each group. Note on board/chart.

You may like to respond with the In Fact facts.

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Section D. Brainstorm (group exercise, 15 minutes)

Begin by asking the following questions:
- Are the images portrayed of older people in children’s media accurate?
- Do they see older people in a fair way? If not, in what way are they unfair, unbalanced or inaccurate?
- Are the images portrayed of older people in programmes for general viewing accurate? Ask for examples of flattering and unflattering images - are they fair?
- Are the images portrayed of older people in television advertisements accurate? Do they represent the lives/abilities/skills of older people?

If the group believes that older people do not figure prominently in their media, or in media in general, allow some time for this point to be discussed.

Some questions worth asking:
- Are older people absent from your fiction because they are irrelevant to your lives?
- Because your fiction is escapist (from real life?)
- Are older people used less often in advertising than younger people because the advertisers think they are unimportant consumers?
- Because older people seem to be something that the viewer will not buy?

Finally ask the trigger question: If older people are under-represented in the public media - does it matter? Why? Why not?

Some points worth making:
- The absence of older people in children’s media could give an unbalanced view of life.
- It could give the impression that older people do not matter, that they have nothing to say or worth hearing.
- It takes away the opportunity for young and old to communicate with each other.

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In Fact:
- When adults figure they tend to be villains or parents/teachers in authority roles.
- Over 60s are rarely included in such stories.
- Similar, popular television programmes for 9-12s (music, craft, magazine programmes, series) rarely feature older people.
- Many modern ‘soap operas’, serials and situation comedies geared for general viewing feature older people in a wide variety of roles.
- Period westerns such as Little House on the Prairie, do treat old people with respect.
- But they also stereotype old people by showing them usually as quiet grandparents in rocking chairs on the front porch.
- Advertisements (on TV) radio, in press) featuring older people are occasional. I rare.
- Older people in ads are often shown as A. vulnerable - needing protection of one sort or another. B. poor - needing help from a charity. C. quaint and old fashioned - needing to dwell on the past.
- A whole range of ads selling goods and services from perfumes through to pizzas, never feature older people as consumers even though their buying power is considerable.

Allow the group to respond to these statements, and record main points on board/chart.
Unit 2

measuring the messages

1. Name people aged 60 and over that you see
   A. in your favourite television programme:
   What best describes them? Circle what fits:
   helpful cross kind strict helpless ill frightened busy interfering
   lazy selfish generous bossy sad annoying
   B. in any children's television programme:
   What best describes them? Circle what fits:
   cross strict helpless ill busy helpful interfering lazy selfish
   generous bossy kind sad annoying frightened
   C. in a television soap opera you watch regularly (e.g., Coronation Street, Glenroe, others):
   What best describes them? Circle what fits:
   helpful cross annoying kind helpless interfering lazy selfish
   generous bossy strict sad ill frightened busy

2. Name people aged 60 and over that you
   A. read about in the papers recently:
   What did you think of them? Circle what fits:
   interesting boring don't know
   B. saw on the news recently:
   What did you think of them? Circle what fits:
   interesting boring don't know

C. heard on the radio recently:
   What did you think of them? Circle what fits:
   interesting boring don't know

3. Name film(s) you saw recently which featured people aged 60 and over:
   What part did they play in the story? Circle what fits:
   grandparent helpless person witty/amusing person
   hero/heroine villain wise person friend

4. Name all the fictional characters you can think of aged 60 and over in some of your favourite books:
   How do you feel about them? Circle what fits:
   like them dislike them don't care about them

5. Name any ads using people aged 60 and over to advertise a product or service:
   How were the people shown? Circle what fits:
   cheerful in control in distress needing help
   giving help looking after others being looked after
   being amused fit unhealthy stupid clever
Unit 3

- Some preparation necessary

About this unit:

This unit brings young and old people together. It has five sections. Section A discusses the type of speaker(s) who would work best with the group and local sources of contact. Section B gives briefing notes and ideas for speaker(s). In section C (group exercise) pupils prepare questions to ask the speaker and in section D (group exercise) a discussion between young and old is generated. Section E (group exercise) looks at some attitudes of old and young.

Sections C and D are the key exercises in this unit.

Resources:

Class resources needed are blackboard/flipchart. The handout “Briefing for Speaker(s)” on pages 24 and 25 needs to be photocopied for speaker(s).

Aims:

Provide a forum where young and old can meet, listen and learn from each other.
Unit 3

Section A. Selecting the speaker(s)

The most effective person(s) to meet a school group will have a warm, outgoing personality, will be comfortable with themselves, and wish the idea of talking to 9-12 year olds. Speaker(s) should be 60 and over. It would be important that they look as well as possible - spry, cheerful and well presented. The best way of ensuring a good session is to choose someone with the above characteristics whom you know.

In the absence of knowing someone suitable personally, local contacts would include:
- Local active retirement association
- Local resident’s association
- Local parish office
- Local bridge club
- Secretary local golf club
- Local Irish Countrywoman’s Association Guild
- Patron, local nursing homes
- Staff, local library
- Other local voluntary groups

It is strongly recommended that you meet the person(s) beforehand, to check that they would be suitable, and offer some briefing.

Discuss with speaker(s) how long they would like to speak for, covering the above points could take about 20 - 30 minutes. An agreed format in which pupils can ask questions as the speaker goes along creates an informal and participative atmosphere.

(See section B. Briefing for speaker(s) on pages 24 and 25).

★ KEY EXERCISE

Section C. Briefing for pupils
(group exercise, 10 minutes)

Before the speaker(s) arrives, tell the group who is coming and why. Explain that they will be telling what life was like for them when they were 9-12 years of age. Brainstorm for the kind of information the group would like to hear. Write actual questions on chartboard. Suggest that individuals ask their question(s) during the session.

★ KEY EXERCISE

Section D. When I was your age
(group exercise, 25 minutes)

Welcome speaker(s). Allow 25 minutes for main speaker, and any group questions. If you have decided on small group discussion with a number of older guests, allow 15 minutes for such discussion, then rejoin as one group. Find out what points emerged by asking some of the questions from the Briefing for Speaker(s) notes, allow 10 minutes for general discussion.

Section E. Older people are cranky, young people are cheeky
(group exercise, 20 minutes)

Change the focus from the past to today. Begin by writing the above sentence on the flipchart and invite comments. After 5 minutes add more points with the following In Fact information.

Close the session by thanking all concerned.

In Fact:
A recent Irish survey of attitudes of 16-19 year olds to ageing and elderly people showed:
- A majority felt anxious about growing old.
- Two-thirds knew no elderly person outside the family that they would regard as a friend.
- 2 out of 3 felt that they were treated well.
- Most felt that old people have a negative image of young people.
- A small majority held a negative image of old people.

In a recent survey of elderly people living in suburbans Dublin, the following comments were made:
- "Much of the young people are better now than they were in my day.
- "Religion isn’t hammered into them now the way it was in our day.
- "Everything is too fast now. In the old days the pace of life was easier.
- "Progress is important and everyone should move with the times.
- "Young people today are not taught about fairness and honesty.
- "Everything is learnt from TV"

Give some, or all, of these findings in statements to the group, as a discussion trigger. Perhaps take one statement at a time and allow some debate on it. In some cases, a consensus may be reached; in others not. Do not have a situation in which the adults are doing all the talking, create an atmosphere in which old and young listen to each other.

Extra essay/projects for group
1. How could contact between young and old people in our neighbourhood be improved?
2. Which is best - the 1930s or the 1990s?
3. What can old and young people learn from each other?
4. Old people are cranky. Young people are cheeky - true or false?
5. Write a report on what happened during Unit 3 - have any of my attitudes changed?
Section B. Briefing for speaker(s)
Describe what life was like for you when you were 9-12 years old.

- Where did you live?
- In what type of home?
- Did you have a room of your own?
- Describe your bedroom; decoration, furniture, posters.
- How many brothers/sisters did you have?
- What was the occupation of father - mother?
- Give a picture of school days at that time. Did you walk to school? How many in class? What did the classroom look like?
- What school rules were there? What happened when you broke them: slap, strap, detention, lines?
- What clothes did you wear?
- What did you do in the holidays?
- What toys did you have?
- What books/comics did you read?
- What food did you eat?
- What kind of rules and regulations were there at home?
- What kind of jobs did you do at home?

- Did you get pocket money? How much was it in today's terms? How did you spend it, and what did you buy?
- What were your favourite sweets?
- What is your happiest memory of that age?
- What is your saddest memory?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What did you think of older people?
- Add anything else that was relevant/important to your life then that would strike a chord with the same age group today.
- Tell your listeners there were no duvets, television, biros, jeans, home central heating, computers, supermarkets, McDonalds, record players, tapes, Lego, role play games, Cindy dolls, crisps, Coke, top twenty, pop stars, videos, track suits, heated swimming pools, showers at home or in school, pizzas, kebabs, karate or family cars.
- Tell them of what was around then, now gone - fountain pens, bottles of ink, steam trains, trams, gramophones, gas street lights.

Note: • It would be important not to suggest that 'the good old days' were better in every way than life today.
• It would be helpful to mention some aspects of life that you feel were better then.
• And some you feel are better now.

To help create an atmosphere, you may like to bring along items from your past - photographs, stamp collection, books, music from the time, anything that would add visual interest to your recollections.
About this unit:
This unit is to give pupils a sense of identity and personal history. It has four sections. Section A (individual exercise) lists questions for pupils on exploring their past, and that of an older person. In section B (individual exercise) pupils collate their findings in a handout. Section C (group exercise) uses class-generated materials to promote discussion on earlier days. In section D (group exercise) the group has an informal debate on the relative merits and demerits of the past and the present.

Sections A and B are the key exercises in this unit.

Resources:
Class resources needed are blackboard / flipchart, writing and colouring materials. To complete section B, the handout “Sharing the Past” on pages 30 and 31 needs to be photocopied for each pupil.

Aims:
• Provide a visual classroom environment in which pupils receive a sense of their personal past.
• Strengthen their sense of identity.
• Make contact with older people either in their family or in the community.
• See links between the past and the present.
Unit 4

*KEY EXERCISE*

**Section A. (Individual exercise)**

**Briefing for pupils**

This is a homework project which must be completed before Unit 4 can happen. Each pupil is asked to find out the following information about themselves.

1. place and date of birth
2. weight at birth
3. the age they took their first steps
4. the first words they spoke
5. favourite food(s) as a baby
6. favourite toy(s)
7. favourite game(s)
8. opinion of older brother(s)/sister(s) towards them.

Each pupil is also asked to think of:

9. earliest memory
10. view from the bedroom window
11. fears as a small child
12. enjoyments as a small child

Each pupil is asked to bring in some mementos of their past. This could include photographs of themselves as baby and toddler, the identification bracelet they wore in hospital, early toys, clothes, shoes and booties.

**Briefing for pupils 2**

Each pupil is also asked to put the above set of questions to grandparent(s), elderly family member, elderly friend, neighbour or to parents(s) in order to discover their memories and experiences of early childhood.

If possible bring in some mementos of the older person's past - old family photographs, medals, documents, recipes, clothes, anything that gives an insight into bygone days.

Further atmosphere will be created by the examination of small pieces of household equipment now outmoded and no longer used at home.

**Note:**

The enjoyment of this unit will be greatly enhanced by the atmosphere created by such class-generated materials - so continue to remind pupils over a period of days regarding the borrowing of material from home.

**Section B.**

**Sharing the Past**

(individual exercise, 20 minutes)

Distribute handout (printed overnight). Have pupils fill it in. Choose a selection to read out what they have written. Ask if others have very different experiences to share.

**Important:**

This project may be sensitive for pupils who belong to separated, single or widowed parents, or for pupils whose grandparents are deceased. Where a number of pupils are known to be in this situation, the briefing should stress that parents or elderly neighbours can be a source of information, as well as grandparents. When choosing pupils to make presentations to the group, the needs of pupils in sensitive situations should be considered.

**Section D.**

**Linking the past to the present**

(informal debate, 20 minutes)

Divide the class into two teams, the past and the present. Each team has to prove that life in their time was/is best by responding to four statements you make. Statements are considered one at a time.

**Statements:**

1. We are better off without TV.
2. We can learn nothing from the past.
3. Older people had harder lives when they were young than we have now.
4. The world is a less caring place today.

Allow open ended discussion on these points. A possible outcome may be that there are good and bad in both the past and the present. Identifying the good from today's world and the world of our grandparents, and recording main points on board / chart, is a positive way to end the session.

Store any old photographs and materials from home in a safe place if planning to use them in Unit 10 - Celebration.

**Section C.**

**Assembling the past**

(group exercise, 10 minutes)

Now turn your attention to the assembled materials and allow each pupil to talk about what they have brought and any other information / memories they discovered. Give the whole group time to look at the memorabilia.

**Some questions worth asking:**

- What kind of pictures of your early lives emerge?
- What range of toys did you have as small children?
- What common fears were there?
- How different are the memories of the people you interviewed from your own?
- What are the points of similarity?
Unit 4

Sharing the Past

1. place of birth: __________________________
   date of birth: __________________________

2. weight at birth: _________________________

3. age at first steps: ______________________

4. first words spoken: _____________________

5. favourite foods: _________________________

6. favourite toys: _________________________

7. favourite games: _______________________

8. opinion of older brother(s) or sister(s):

9. earliest memory: _______________________

10. view from bedroom window

11. fears: _________________________________

12. enjoyments: ___________________________
Planning for growth

About this unit:
This unit explores pupils' feelings about their own ageing. It has four sections. In section A (individual exercise) each pupil creates a picture of their older selves, leading to a discussion on physical aspects of ageing. Section B (group exercise) looks at how growing old affects us emotionally. Section C (group exercise) is a small group discussion on 'Looking good, feeling well', and in section D (group exercise) the group responds to handout 'Looking Good and Feeling Well Begins Now'.
Sections C and D are the key exercises in this unit.

Resources:
Class resources needed are blackboard or flipchart, paper and drawing materials. To complete section D, the handout 'Looking Good and Feeling Well Begins Now' on pages 36 and 37 needs to be photocopied for each pupil.

Aims:
- Allow the group to reflect on the fact that they will grow old some day.
- Receive accurate information on potential physical and mental aspects of growing old.
- Learn that good physical and mental health habits formed now can crucially affect well-being in old age.
Section A. Looking good (individual exercise, 20 minutes)

Begin by asking each pupil, to consider the person they are now, and to visualise and draw a picture of themselves at 65. After 10 minutes or so, invite a few pupils to show what they have drawn, and explain why. Then open the subject into a general discussion, allowing more pupils to show and explain their self-portrait.

Some questions worth asking about the drawings:
- Do you have spectacles?
- Do you have grey or thinning hair, or no hair at all?
- Are you overweight?
- Have you lines on your face?
- Have you hair on your face?
- Are you standing erect or bent over?
- Are you smiling?
- Are you frowning?
- How are you dressed?
- What are you doing?

Allow some discussion on these points, and then respond with the In fact facts.

In Fact:
- There is no such thing as a typical older person and you will all age at different rates.
- This rate is largely influenced by the care you have taken of yourself during your life.
- It is also affected by family patterns. Baldness, going thin on top is a hereditary condition. If your grandfather has a thinning mop of hair at 65, you probably will too.
- Aspects of ageing affect everyone to some degree and are due to built-in body changes as you grow older.
- Your hair goes grey because your pigment cells which deposit colour in the hair shaft gradually slow down and stop doing so. This slowing down process normally begins in your late 30s.
- Your skin wrinkles because with age skin tissue called collagen loses its elasticity. It is less able to stretch and wrinkling results.
- It is commonly believed that men’s faces age more slowly than women’s faces.
- Your sight changes because with age the lenses in your eyes become less flexible so that they have difficulty in changing focus.
- The rate at which this happens varies from person to person, but many people find they need glasses in their late 40s, early 50s.
- As you age, changes may occur in the inner ear which lead to hearing loss.

Allow a few minutes for the group to respond to this information and ask questions.

Section B. Brainstorm: Feeling well (group exercise, 10 minutes)

Begin with open-ended questions:
2. What factors will affect how you feel? Where you live? The amount of money you have? How healthy you are? Whether you feel lonely or not? How busy you are? How wanted you feel? How helpful you find your religion? What else? Write group responses on flipchart/blackboard.

Some points worth making:
In order to feel well at any age:
- Your basic needs for food, shelter and warmth must be met.
- You need meaning and purpose in your life. You need to feel wanted, worthwhile and useful.
- You need to feel relatively well physically, free from either acute (sharp) or chronic (constant) pain.
- You need to be able to give and get love, be a friend, give friendship and have companionship.
- You need to be free from constant fear.

Allow time for the group to discuss this.

KEY EXERCISE

Section C. Looking good, feeling well (small group discussion, 20 minutes)

Divide the class into 5 small groups. The task for each group is to answer the question “what can we do now to help us look good and feel well at 65?” Appoint group leaders to record comments, give groups 10 minutes and then rejoin as one group. Record suggestions from each group on board/chart. Allow a few minutes for general discussion.

KEY EXERCISE

Section D. Handout: Looking Good and Feeling Well Begins Now (group exercise, 10 minutes)

Distribute handout (printed overhead). Allow group time to read, then take questions and comments.
Unit 5

Looking Good, and Feeling Well Begins Now.

Eating healthily now (whole grain cereals, fruits, vegetables, potatoes, meats, mild cheese) means that you are giving yourself the building blocks you need for a healthy body now and later.

Brushing your teeth thoroughly morning and night and after eating sweets means you will have fewer fillings and are less likely to have false teeth in old age.

Learning to get on with people now is a skill you will have all your life.

Learning to be a good friend now means you will be a good friend always, and have good friends right into old age.

Eating sensibly now (not too many fries, chips, sweets and sugary foods) means that you are not laying down fat cells now which could make you overweight when you are older.

Deciding now to abstain from alcohol at least until age 18 means that you will avoid many problems for yourself and your family.

Taking exercise now and regularly all during your life means that you are less likely to be overweight in old age and your joints are likely to be supple and strong—not stiff and weak.
Some preparation is necessary

About this unit:
This unit looks at how older people live around the world. It has three sections. In section A (group exercise) teams are chosen through a short quiz. Section B (group exercise) examines life for global grandparents, and section C (group exercise) discusses the findings and their implications.

Section B is the key exercise in this unit.

Resources:
Class resources needed are blackboard or flipchart and marker pens. To complete section B, the handout 'Global Grandparents' on pages 42 and 43 needs to be photocopied, enlarged and cut into 5 sections.

Aims:
• Provide a fun and participative way to explore differing ways of life.
• Learn how old people around the world live.
• See how attitudes and approaches to the older population vary in differing societies.
• Reflect on implications for our own society.

Dressing up:
The enjoyment will be enhanced by creating a rich class atmosphere through dressing up. Some days before the unit, suggest that pupils bring in a selection of clothing which could be adapted for ethnic dress from around the world. This could include western style blouses, cardigans, skirts, aprons, overalls, rights, colourful shawls, ethnically printed skirts and dresses, headscarves, shady hats, long scarves, collarless grandad shirts, long trousers, braces, kaftans, dressing gowns and colourful pieces of cloth (tablecloths, towels) to be used as saris, sarongs, cloaks and veils.

Asia: Men and women in South East Asia wear sarongs. These are lengths of cotton which are wrapped round waists and worn with shirts or embroidered blouses. To make a sarong you need a sheet of fabric about 2m long. Fold round waist and tuck in. Filipino men wear long collarless shirts.

Africa: Men and women in many African countries wear brightly coloured clothes called khangas which they wrap round the body keeping arms and shoulders free, or around the waist with a shirt or tshirt on top. Women often wear headscarves tied behind the head. Men also wear western style dress.

Hats: Some South East Asians wear cone shaped hats of straw. A turban, which is worn by people in many hot countries, is a long piece of cloth wrapped round and round the head.

Ethnic jewellery includes glass beads, necklaces made from seeds, shells, animals' teeth, and metal arm and leg bracelets. In some African tribes it is shameful for a married woman to be seen without earrings.
Unit 6

Section A.
"What Country am I?" (group exercise, 10 minutes)

Divide the class into 5 groups. Give
information on each country in turn
(see below). The first group to guess
the country becomes that nation
group. Continue until all countries
are guessed. (The Philippines and
Kenya may pose problems for this age
group).

Country 1
1. I am in Europe.
2. I am an island.
3. I have been called the island of saints
and scholars.
4. When you fly over me you see lots
of green.
5. One of my citizens won a gold medal
for boxing in the 1992 Olympics.
Answer: Ireland

Country 2
1. I am in Asia.
2. I am a number of islands in the
Pacific Ocean.
3. China is the largest country north of
me, and Australia is south of me.
4. The name of my capital city rhymes
with vanilla.
5. My people have black hair, brown
eyes and darkish skin.
Answer: Philippines

Country 3
1. I am in Europe.
2. I am less than the size of Leinster, yet
I have a population of 13 million.
3. Some of my land is under sea level,
so my people have had to build dykes
to hold in the sea.
4. Amsterdam is my capital city.
5. I am famous for clogs, tulips and
diamonds.
Answer: Holland

Country 4
1. I am on the other side of the Atlantic
Ocean from Ireland.
2. It has been said I am ahead of Ireland
in everything except time.
3. When you fly from Ireland to my
capital city, you have to put your
watch back five hours.
4. I gave the world hamburgers,
Madonna, jeans, Disneyland and
Batman.
5. My president's official home is called
the White House.
Answer: America

Country 5
1. I am in west Africa.
2. My people have dark curly hair and
dark skin.
3. They live in tribes, some tribes
are settled, some are on the move
with their animals.
4. My capital city is Nairobii.
5. We have a population of 45 million.
Answer: Kenya

KEY EXERCISE

Section B. Global Grandparents (group exercise, 30 minutes)

Before:
Distribute appropriate nation handout
(priced overhead) to each team and
allow them a few minutes to study it.
Choose 'grandparents' from each team.
Assign them to dress up to suit their
part and encourage other team members
to dress up also (see Dressing Up on page 39).
Prepare board/chart for game. If board
is wide enough, divide it into six
sections lengthwise, print the name of
each country on top of each section.
Alternatively use one chart page per
country.

During:
Ask the grandparents in the first group
to name their country, their family
names, their ages. Go to each group and
ask for similar information (1. on
handout). Then proceed to obtain
information under 2. from each group
before moving on. Write the
information briefly on board/chart in
each nation's segment/age.

Note:
Keep a copy of the Handout 'Global
Grandparents' to correct/amplify facts if
necessary.

After:
If using a chart, tear off each nation's
page and display round the room so that
each group can see them.

Section C.
East & West, Which is Best? (group exercise, 15 minutes)

With the information contained on
board/chart as the group focus, open up
discussion. Perhaps spend a few
minutes reminding people of the facts
given, then let the discussion develop.

Some questions worth asking:
- What country do you think treats its
  older people well?
- In what ways does it do this?
- What factors help this society act in
  this way?
- What country do you think treats its
  older people badly?
- In what ways does it do this?
- What factors influence how this
  society acts?

Some points worth making:
- Many countries much poorer than
  ours financially, seem to have a
  particularly caring attitude to
  older people.
- Many give a role and a value to older
  people within family and the
  community.
- Perhaps some of their ideas could be
  adapted here.
- There are values/ideas that older
  people could pass on.

Allow some discussion on these points.
It would be interesting to find out which
country the group would like to grow
old in, and why.
Unit 6

Global Grandparents

1. I am John O’Neill (man). I am 61. I am Maureen O’Neill (woman). I am 61. We are Catholics.
   2. We live in the Irish Midlands. The house is too big for us now, but we have friends and neighbours nearby and we do not need to move. I (John) worked in a local shop and have a small pension from them. We also have a state pension. We are not well off but we manage.
   3. We have four children. Two are abroad and we live in Dublin.
   4. Our health is not too bad. I (John) had a heart attack a few years ago and had to cut down on wine. I (Maureen) have arthritis. We are both involved in parish work, enjoy reading and television.
   5. We have 10 grandchildren, but we do not see too much of them. They call us Nova and Granad. They grow up very quickly.
   6. We are not looking forward to growing old. We hope we will not have to go into a nursing home and that we will be able to look after each other at home.
   7. A good thing about being old is Ireland today is that you have free travel on buses and trains, and a nice friendly way of life in many places still.
   8. Bad things are that you do not see too much of your children or grandchildren and other people are not always treated with respect.

1. I am Pedro de la Cruz (man). I am 67. I am Maria de la Cruz (woman). I am 62. We are Catholics.
   2. We live in Manila, our capital city, in a small house. I (Pedro) get no pension from my employer when I retired at 65. We get a small government pension but it is not enough to live on.
   3. We have eight children. We live with our youngest son and his family. Two of our children died as babies.
   4. We are not so healthy. We do not have good nourishing food or enough health care. Some of our teeth have fallen out and many friends our age have died.
   5. We have 15 grandchildren and live with 4 of them. They call us Lola (grandfather), Lola (grandmother) and we help to look after them every day.
   6. We do not fear growing old too much. We feel God and our family will look after us as best they can.
   7. A good thing about being old in the Philippines is that we are very close to our family and very much respected.
   8. A bad thing is that many of us are very poor. There is only one doctor for every 40,000 people and life is hard. We have few possessions and spend most of our lives working.

1. I am Vin Van Dijk (man). I am 62. I am Mieke Van Dijk (woman). I am 59.
   2. We do not belong to a church.
   3. We live in a house in Ede, a town in north eastern Holland. We rent it from the local authority. I (Vin) retired at 65 with a pension from my employer and we also have a state pension equal to the minimum working wage.
   4. We have two children who live in Amsterdam, over an hour’s journey away. We see them about every two months.
   5. We are both very healthy, though a little fat as we love white bread. We are up early to clean the house, wash the windows and do the garden. We both have bicycles and ride on special cycle lanes around the town so it is very safe. We watch a lot of television.
   6. We have five grandchildren and they come to us during their school holidays every year. They call us 'Opa' (grandfather) and 'Oma' (grandmother). These names are affectionate ones for grandparents.
   7. We do not fear growing old too much. We may be able to move into an apartment designed for older people, with meals provided and a doctor on call.
   8. A good thing about being old in Holland is that it is a flat country, very well kept and the environment is suitable for people our age.
   9. A bad thing is that state care is efficient, but sometimes impersonal. Many people feel the state is looking after their parents, so they do not bother too much.
WHEN CARE IS NEEDED

About this unit:
This unit looks at the kind of situations in which some old people need care. It has three sections. Section A (group exercise) opens up the subject. In section B (individual exercise) a case history is used to discuss care options. Section C (individual exercise) uses art to explore pupils' ideas on a caring environment for an older person.

Sections B and C are the key exercises in this unit.

Resources:
Class resources needed are blackboard or flipchart, drawing paper and colouring materials. To complete section B, the handout 'Once upon a Time' on pages 48 and 49 needs to be photocopied for each pupil.

Aims:
• Allow pupils to see that some older people - for whatever reason - need care.
• Appreciate that the type and duration of care needed will vary from person to person.
• Learn about the services currently available to older people.
• Realise that with proper community support, many people can be cared for in their own home, which is what many prefer.
• Experience some empathy with an older person by developing ideas on suitable environmental design.
Section A. Brainstorm
(group exercise, 20 minutes)

Begin with some open-ended questions:

- Are all older people able to take care of themselves completely or do some need help?
- Who might need help?
- Why?
- What kind of help would be best?
- Who should give the help?
- Suppose there is no family, no neighbours around, what happens then?

It could be a good idea to mix the general with the personal:

- What would happen if an older neighbour became ill?
- Who would look after her/him at home?
- Would they need help lifting her/him?
- How would she/he manage the stairs?

Or other concrete examples to make the subject real.

Write responses on board/chart and after some general discussion, give the information found in the In Fact box.

In Fact:

- 11 out of 12 people over 65 live at home.
- Most of them are able to look after themselves.
- Only 1 out of every 5 people over 65 receives informal continuing care at home.
- But as people grow old they need a little or a lot of help.
- 2 out of 5 people aged 75 need some kind of informal continuing care at home.
- Care is usually given by a family member, either living with the older person, or in another household.

Other points worth making:

- The type and amount of help over 75s need varies widely.
- Some are very independent but may lack the physical strength to carry out the bin, say, or mow the grass, and may need this done for them.
- Some old people are physically frail and need help outside the home, such as a lift to the church, or assistance with shopping.
- Many old people suffer from a bone joint disease called arthritis and cannot get around too well, so they too can need a hand with chores and messages.
- Some old people may be physically or mentally ill, or disabled, or be confined to bed, and need round-the-clock care.
- A minority of older people grow mentally confused and need the kind of care that keeps them physically safe and soothes their fears.

Some questions worth asking:

- Do you know an older person living on their own?
- How do you think they manage?
- What might help them manage better?

KEY EXERCISE

Section B. ‘Once upon a time’
(individual exercise, 20 minutes)

Distribute the handout (printed overhead).

Ask each pupil to write their own ending to Alice’s story. Invite a number to read out their ending, then ask some questions – who thinks Alice must go into a nursing home? Who thinks Eemer’s family should make a spare bedroom available, and so on, to canvas the general mood. Listen to all the suggestions and write some of them on the board/chart. Then respond with the following:

A possible happy ending:

Staff in the local health centre and the family doctor listen to what Alice would prefer and then meet together. Eemer and Alice are invited to the meeting. This is what they decide. Eemer agrees to come down twice a week to see her mother and some of the grandchildren agree to take turns to sleep over in Alice’s house one night a week. A neighbour undertakes to drive Alice to church on Sunday and to look in quite often. With Alice’s agreement, she has a key to the house and she has Eemer’s number in case of any problem.

The local public health nurse who visits people at home, takes Alice on her patient list. From now on she too will call regularly, will help Alice to bath herself, and generally keep in touch. The nurse will call in the doctor if worried about Alice’s health.

Alice is also happy to be visited by a member of the home help service, who will now call several times a week, do the ironing, hoovering, shopping and any other little jobs needed. She is told she can have a hot cooked lunch delivered by the local meals on wheels service. She is not sure she wants this, so it is decided to begin it on a trial basis and see how it goes.

Discuss this happy ending. What is happy about it?

It could be important to point out that the consultation, the way Alice’s wishes were considered, and how the solution is a combination of family involvement (voluntary) and professional involvement (statutory), makes it worthwhile.

KEY EXERCISE

Section C. Alice’s room.
(individual exercise, 15 minutes)

Ask each pupil to design a sitting room that Alice would be happy, safe and comfortable in. Use A3 paper for maximum impact. Invite a number to show what they have done.

Point out that there is no such thing as an ideally designed room for an older person, everyone has individual tastes and interests.

There are, however, some standard do’s and don’ts to make a room comfortable, safe and secure. These can be read out to the class or printed on board/chart.

Do’s & Don’ts

Do’s
- Good lighting - so that Alice can read without strain and see properly when moving around.
- Convenient, safe heating - because she feels the cold in winter, if sitting a lot. Switch-on heat is convenient and saves a lot of labour. But Alice prefers a real coal fire. This needs a fire guard.
- A smoke alarm.
- Comfortable seating, fitted carpets, well lined curtains and pleasant decor.
- Good access to daylight and ideally a nice view.
- A telephone - to make it easy for her to stay in touch with people and to use in an emergency.
- Personal touches - her pictures, ornaments, photographs, flowers, books, magazines and belongings that turn a house into a home.

Don’ts
- Trailing electric flexes and cables which Alice could trip over.
- Floor level slugs which are difficult to reach.
- High shelving with contents out of easy reach.
- Rugs on highly polished surfaces which could cause a fall.

Discuss and agree on a room which combines manual and group generated ideas.
'Once upon a time'

Once upon a time a widow called Alice lived on our road. All her children except one, Emer, had emigrated. Alice lived alone, but she had a friend who called. Emer and the grandchildren visited regularly and Alice seemed content. We used to see her going down for her pension and getting the bus into town to do her shopping. She was always a nice neighbour.

Ten years passed by, Alice is now 78. You can see that she is slowing up and she no longer catches the bus into town, but shops locally. Her friend has died and now only Emer visits. The grandchildren are growing up and they are not around so much. One day in January Alice falls and cannot get to the phone. She lies on the floor all night and Emer finds her the next morning, cold and shocked, with a broken leg. Alice goes to hospital. When she comes home, she has changed. She is less able and is frightened. She does not think she can look after herself completely, but she does not want to go into a nursing home. There is no room for her in Emer’s house.

What is to happen to Alice?
Unit 8

Grandad lives in my house

About this unit:
This unit is about old and young people spending time together. It has three sections. Section A (group exercise) is a role play, followed by a general discussion. In section B (individual exercise) each pupil draws up rules which would help the generations live together and in section C (group exercise) the group consider some guidelines offered.

Section A is the key exercise in this unit.

Resources:
Class resources needed are blackboard or flipchart and writing materials. To complete section C, the handout ‘Our Rules Under One Roof’ on pages 54 and 55 needs to be photocopied for each pupil.

Aims:
- Provide a forum in which pupils can experience some of the issues involved in living with an older person.
- Reflect on that experience and identify issues raised.
- Look at the feelings behind these.
- Explore ways of improving the way young and old people can get along.
KEY EXERCISE

Section A. Role Play
(group exercise, 35 minutes)

Notes:
An alternative approach is to write your own plot with the group through a short discussion on the kind of situations with old people/grandparents that cause problems for young people.

Plot “Who controls the Remote Control?”

Since your grandfather has come to stay in your house (while recovering from an illness) you cannot get to watch your favourite programme. He thinks it is rubbish and wants to turn to the sport or news channel instead. He usually has charge of the remote control and often switches over in the middle of your programme. You have complained to Mum and all she said was “Don’t be rude to your Grandad”. He is her father. So you want to Dad and he agreed to have a get-together to try and sort things out.

You also want to talk about your friends not being allowed to in play since Grandad came to stay. Your older brother says just ignore the old man but you would like to be friends with him really. Your younger sister loves Grandad. You think she is his pet.

Six role players are needed:
1. Main son/daughter
2. Grandfather
3. Mother
4. Father
5. Younger sister
6. An older brother

Before:
Begin by choosing players and invite them to sit in a small circle in the middle of the room. The only rule is that there should be one person speaking at a time, otherwise nobody will hear anyone properly. Have the rest of the class sit in an outer circle around the players. Tell them that their task is to watch the role play intently and see how the family get on together. Read out the role play slowly.

During:
Start the role play by asking the father to open the meeting and explain why it has been called. Allow it to run for 10-15 minutes if possible. Do not be in too much of a hurry to jump in, even if it seems to be going poorly. People need a while to think themselves into their role, and while the interaction may seem silly or poor quality, something is happening.

After:
After 10-15 minutes end it, irrespective of whether or not the group has come to a consensus. Go first to each player in turn and ask them how they felt in the role. Next, ask some of the audience to comment on the interaction of the role play - not the outcome.

Some questions worth asking:
Who listened?
Who got angry?
Who tried to bully?
Who was afraid of a row?
Who looked for sympathy?
Who tried to make peace?
Who began to make decisions?

Finally to end the role play, have the players shut their eyes, breathe out a few times, breathe out the role, and as they do so, breathe out any anger, negativity or hurt they took in with the role. Just let it go. Have the group resume their normal seats and begin to look at the issues that came up.

These may include:

Young people:
• Finding it hard to get used to a new member in the family.
• Wanting to get close to their grandparents, not knowing how.
• Feeling powerless in their day to day affairs.
• Thinking nobody listens to them properly.
• Resenting other family members who seem preferred.

Grandparent:
• Feeling lonely and out of sorts in a different home.
• Finding it hard getting used to young children again.
• Wanting to get to know them better, not knowing how.
• Thinking that the children get too much.
• Needing the comfort of something familiar like TV news and sport.

Parents:
• Finding it difficult to adjust to grandparent.
• Trying to make sure he is welcome.
• Feeling everyone should pull their weight a bit.
• Wondering how they will cope with everything.

Section B. My Rules
(individual exercise, 10 minutes)

Ask each pupil to draw up 10 rules which would help three generations live peacefully together under one roof.

Invite a number to read out their list and write some of the better ideas on board/chart.

Section C. Handout:
Our Rules: Under One Roof
(group exercise, 10 minutes)

Distribute handout (printed overleaf). Conclude by hearing some responses to it. You may decide to combine points from both My Rules and Our Rules to come up with the 10 points the group think are best.

Some questions worth asking:
• What was the main problem?
• Did the family move towards solving it?
• What behaviour was helpful in the role play?
• What behaviour was unhelpful?
• Could Grandad and grandchild learn to be friends?
• What would help this happen?
• Who would gain if this happened?

Use board/chart to note points raised.
Our Rules: Under One Roof

1. Let everyone have a say.

2. Agree some common rules.

3. State any areas that may cause difficulty - TV viewing, wish for quiet as against need for play, and so on.

4. Accept that everyone will have to compromise on something.

5. Try to listen to the other person's point of view.

6. Realise that the generations have a lot to give each other - such as ideas, experience, memories and curiosity.

7. Spend time together and learn to enjoy each other's company.

8. Agree that everyone needs privacy and space some of the time.

9. If you have been wrong, say sorry, and make up.

10. Respect everyone no matter whether they are 9 or 90.
Unit 9

D I F F E R E N T

About this unit:

This unit looks at similarities and differences between old and young people and reinforces some of the points in earlier units. It has two sections. Section A (group exercise) is a fun game to describe older people. Section B (group exercise) is an attitudinal quiz, followed by a group discussion.

Section B is the key exercise in this unit.

Resources:

Class resources needed are three sheets of paper. On the first you print in large letters the word AGREE, on the second, DISAGREE, and on the third the words, DON'T KNOW. Some physical space is needed to play the game, plus blackboard or flipchart on which to record some comments.

Aims:

- Provide an opportunity to reflect on points discussed in earlier units.
- Look at personal attitudes to ageing.
- Realise that my present self has strong links with my older self.
- Learn that young people and old people have much in common.
Section A. Game: 
The Minister's Granny 
(group exercise, 15 minutes)

This is an adaptation of a well-known game 'The Minister's Car'. In 'The Minister's Granny', you begin by saying "My Granny (or grandad) is a..." (insert adjective beginning with the letter A) Granny (or grandad). The next person inserts an adjective beginning with the letter B and so on around the circle. So you could have a range of descriptions of grandparents such as acrobatic, bulgy, cat-loving, daffy...and so on.

The funnier the better. At the end - write some of the more colourful descriptions on the board/chart and ask "are your grandparents really like that?". This could lead to a discussion of what adjectives most accurately describe grandparents and older people in general. Brainstorm adjectives and spend a little time having the group respond to them.

Section B. 
So where do I stand? 
(group exercise, 35 minutes)

Before:
It is necessary to move tables and chairs back against the walls for this game so as to leave as much central space as possible. Place the agree sign on the floor at one end of the room, DON'T KNOW on the floor in the middle of the room and DISAGREE at the other end. Stand on one side of the room with the group opposite you on the other side. Explain how the game works. You will read out a statement. Each person will consider it, then go and stand at the sign AGREE, DISAGREE, or DON'T KNOW, depending on how they feel.

During:
You may need to read out some statements a few times. When everyone has taken up their chosen spot, turn to the majority group and ask them why they feel as they do. Allow people to give reasons for their stance. Next, turn to the minority group and invite them to convince the others to change their minds. See how the DON'T KNOW feels. Give people time to win others over by their arguments. Allow some time for discussion, then move to the next statement. Sometimes turn to the majority group first, insist on just one voice at a time so that people can hear. You may decide to use only some of the statements on the list and spend more time on each.

Though in Another Dress

So where do I stand?

Statements:
1. Older people need special care.
2. Old people get a raw deal in the 1990s.
3. Life can be hard when you are young.
4. Looking old and wrinkled is awful.
5. Life is no fun when you are old.
6. I usually try to get my own way.
7. Some older people are lonely.
8. Sometimes I feel nobody understands me.
9. When you are old you are afraid a lot of the time.
10. Being kind is more important than looking good.
11. Sometimes I need special care.
12. Older people always want their own way.
13. I am sometimes afraid.

Some questions worth asking:
• In what ways would a group of 65 year olds in this room be different from you?
• In what ways would they be similar?
• In what ways would you be different to your 65 year old self?
• In what ways will you be similar?

Discuss. If possible, agree some points of similarity and difference between old and young now, and between our present selves and our future selves.

You could end the session with the following statement:

We do not just suddenly become old. We are growing older slowly, gradually, day by day, and the choices we make today affect the kind of person we will be tomorrow.

Age is Opportunity, No Less
Some preparation is necessary

About this unit:

This unit is about holding a party to bring young and old together, to use the programme Bearing Fruit as the basis for an exhibition and to celebrate the learning experience. It has three sections. Section A suggests the class and unit materials which could be exhibited to best effect. Section B talks about local publicity and section C suggests a format for the day.

Resources:

School resources needed are classroom or hall.

Aims:

- Provide a forum where pupils can reflect on what they have done in the programme.
- Bring the generations together in a fun and purposeful way.
- Exhibit the programme to a wider public.
Section A. Setting up

Prepare the classroom (or larger room if being used) by selecting the materials that will show themselves off to best effect. If there is sufficient space, the programme could be exhibited unit by unit. Each unit could display title, aims, some idea of process using class-generated project and art work, group responses - as well as some facts, graphics and handouts from this manual.

If space is limited, a flavour of the pack could be offered by displaying one unit in total (units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, could work well), with some of the best materials provided by other units as support. Exercises, such as ‘Measuring the Messengers’ (unit 2), ‘Sharing the Past’ (unit 4), ‘Looking Good and Feeling Well Begins Now’ (unit 5) and ‘Our Rules: Under One Roof’ (unit 8) would make good and thought-provoking exhibits.

Create a colourful and evocative atmosphere by displaying the kind of materials, dress, artefacts, photographs, toys, souvenirs and equipment used in ‘View from the Park Bench’ (unit 3) and ‘Digging for Roots’ (unit 4). Some pupils could be dressed in clothes from earlier times. Others could be dressed as representatives from ‘Global Grandparents’ (unit 6).

Section B. Showing off

Invite the participant(s) from ‘View from the Park Bench’ (unit 3) and use the resource list of local contacts to identify other older people to invite along. If there is space, invite the parents/ grandparents/older friends of the pupils who took part in the programme. Contact the local newspaper (news or features editor) and ask them to come and take a picture, and/or send a reporter to view the exhibition. Prepare a short press release which states:

1. Name, origins and aims of programme.
2. Number and ages of pupils who participated and over what duration.
3. A flavour of the contents.
4. Some short quotes from participants about what they thought of the programme, and what they learnt.

Section C. Celebrating

Welcome everyone and have a number of pupils prepared to give a flavour of the programme. Avoid the temptation to give an outline of each unit for the benefit of guests - too much detail will confuse and overload.

Far better to get them involved and show how the programme works. An excellent group exercise would be to play the game ‘So where do I stand’ (unit 9) with everyone taking part.

Finally allow everyone time to mix informally and view the exhibited materials. Refreshments could be provided. If the exhibition, Beaming Fruit, can remain in place for some days to give other pupils an opportunity to see it, so much the better.