



**Global  
Village**

Global Citizenship  
in Primary Schools

# 'The Promise'

A Teacher's Accompanying Guide  
for Junior Primary School

THE  
PROMISE

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This is a Global Village resource created by Ailbhe Joyce



**Irish Aid**  
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs



**Class group:** Junior Primary School (Infants-2nd Class)

**Global Citizenship Education (GCE) themes:** Environmental awareness, Sustainability, Inclusivity

**Purpose:** To instil in students the values of empathy, environmental stewardship, and the importance of fulfilling commitments by encouraging action as global citizens.

**Direct primary school curriculum links:**

Activity number(s)	Primary Curriculum Framework 2023 Key Competency	Primary Curriculum Framework 2023 curriculum area	Primary School Curriculum 1999 subject	Strands
1.2, 1.3, 2.1	Being a Communicator and Using Language	Language	English	Oral language; Reading, Writing
1.2	Being an Active Learner	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Education	Science	Living Things
3.1	Being a Digital Learner			
4.1	Being Mathematical		Mathematics	Number, Data, Measures
3.2	Being Creative	Arts Education	Visual Arts	Fabric & Fibre
2.2			Drama	Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding.
1.1	Being Well	Wellbeing	Physical Education	Outdoor & Adventure activities
All activities	Being an Active Citizen		Social, Personal & Health Education	Myself & Others; Myself & the Wider World
4.2	Being an Active Learner	Social & Environmental Education	History	Stories; Change & Continuity

**Aistear/Siolta theme links:**

- Identity and Belonging
- Wellbeing

**Sustainable Development Goals link:** Goal 11: Climate Action. Goal 13: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

For more information about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), visit <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

**Please note:** As with all resources, it is important that the facilitator reads the resource in advance and considers if activities and/or content needs to be adapted for learners in the class.

While reading ‘The Promise’ by Nicola Davies, it is essential to understand the difference between secrets and promises, especially concerning child safeguarding.

- Promises: In the context of this story, promises are commitments or pledges that characters make to themselves or others to bring about positive change. Promises can be uplifting and foster trust and responsibility.
- Secrets: Secrets, on the other hand, can sometimes be harmful. If a child is asked to keep a secret that makes them feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused, it is important for them to know they should tell a trusted adult.

Always encourage children to speak up if they are unsure about a promise or a secret. It is crucial for children to understand that certain secrets should never be kept, especially if they involve someone’s safety or well-being. Trusted adults, such as parents, teachers, or caregivers, are there to help and protect them. This resource aims to promote literacy while ensuring the safety and well-being of all children.

**Acknowledgement:** Global Village gratefully acknowledges support received from Irish Aid to conduct Global Citizenship Education activities in Ireland. The content, approaches and activities outlined in this resource are entirely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent or reflect the policy of Irish Aid.

# 1. Pre-reading Activities

## 1.1 Wellbeing (Physical Education – Senses Sit-Spot & Feely Bags):

- Discuss the five senses with students (smell, sight, sound, touch, taste) using the prompt questions below as a guide.
  - What are our five senses? Which parts of our body do we use to explore our five senses?*
  - Which sense do you find easiest to use indoors / outdoors?*
  - Which sense is it difficult for you to concentrate on indoors / outdoors?*
  - Why is it important to use our senses?*
  - Which sense should we explore carefully when outdoors? (Taste: this sense should only be explored with carefully selected plants that are 100% safe and researched by an adult. Enforce a 'No pick, No lick' policy for students at this point in the discussion.)*
  - Let's breathe in some fresh air using our noses. What does it smell like? Does air everywhere smell like this? Does every person in the world have clean air to breathe? (Why/not?) In some environments (e.g. in traffic jams, beside factories, next to a landfill site), air is dirty or polluted so it does not smell nice and it is unhealthy for people, plants and animals.*
  - How would you feel if your air was not clean?*
  - How can we make sure we keep our air clean? How will this affect people in other places?*
  - How does clean air help our other senses? How does unclean air affect our other senses?*
- Focusing on the importance of clean air, explain that in this session the class will explore four of the five senses outside (smell, sight, sound, touch). Students are first asked to find a sit-spot of their own outdoors and to sit silently for 5 minutes to listen, smell and look at the nature around them. After 5 minutes, hold a feedback session with the students where students describe what they experienced to a partner or to the whole class group. The below sentence starters could be used as discussion prompts:
  - I saw...*
  - I heard...*
  - I smelled...*
  - My favourite thing about my sit spot was...*
  - I was surprised when...*
  - I noticed...*
  - I wonder...*
- Finally, explain that the class will now explore nature using their sense of touch. Using opaque feely bags filled with enough objects for each small group, students have to guess what nature object is in each bag (e.g. blades of grass, leaves, stones, soil) and explain the reasoning behind their guesses (e.g. I think this is a stone because it's hard and smooth; I think this is grass because it is thin and bends easily). Once the contents of each bag have been correctly guessed, students choose one nature object to examine closely using their sense of sight or touch individually or in small groups.
- Discuss whether soils, grasses and stones look the same all over the world? What might be the same and different? Why might this be the case? Where have you been that you saw different types of soils, grasses and stones? How is the environment here linked to other parts of the world? (e.g. bird migration, ocean currents, air pollution etc. See Appendix 1 for some detailed examples).

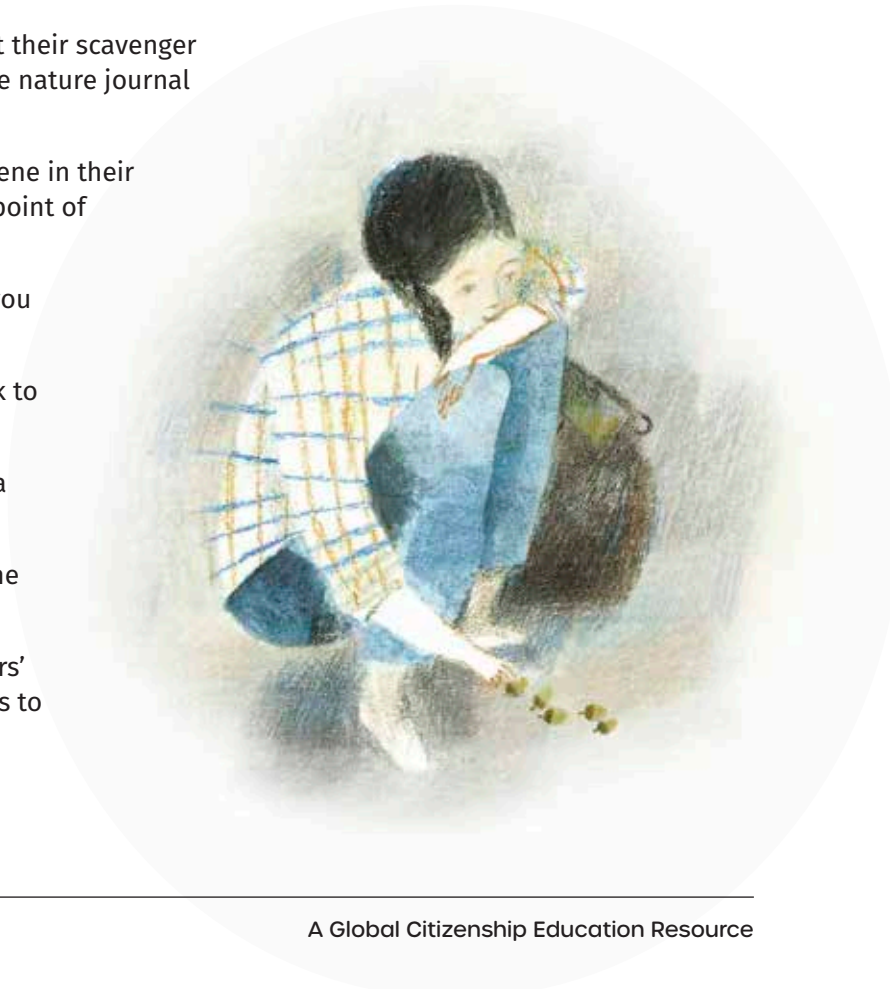


## 1.2 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Education (Science – Nature scavenger hunt):

- Students engage in a [nature scavenger hunt](#) where they explore their outdoor environment. Provide learners with scavenger hunt pages in [reusable dry erase pockets](#) (appendix 2a); magnifying glasses; binoculars (or recycled toilet roll holders); nets or bug catchers; to observe plants, insects, and other natural elements up close.
- If you wish to incorporate IT in this activity, iPads or phones can be used by the students to photograph each clue on the scavenger hunt that students find or alternatively, egg cartons can be used to collect samples of certain objects at the teacher’s discretion (Note: Exercise caution when picking samples of stinging nettles). Safe practice should be used when incorporating IT. Adhere to your school’s IT policy.
- As students find each item, encourage them to describe their findings using descriptive language and sensory details (e.g. *I found a green leaf with pointy edges. I touched a smooth rock that was very heavy. I saw a colourful bird that flew away quickly*). Further discuss each of the objects’ significance in nature and its role in the local and global ecosystem (See Appendix 2b for some detailed examples). After the nature scavenger hunt, gather the students together to share their findings and reflections on the importance of preserving nature locally and globally and their feelings around being an active and eco-conscious citizen. The following reflection questions can be used to prompt discussion:
  - a. Name one of the things you have found (e.g. oak leaf, pine cone, bird feather).
  - b. Describe where you found one of your objects.
  - c. What is your favourite thing that you found? Why is it your favourite?
  - d. Describe how your favourite object looks, feels and smells.
  - e. Using one or some of your objects, make up a story to tell your partner (teacher models).
  - f. Which elements of nature do you experience every day at home or in school?
  - g. What kind of natural environment would you like to see around you?

### Languages (English – Nature journaling):

- Students are invited to write or draw about their scavenger hunt discoveries in nature journals (Sample nature journal pages in Appendix 3.)
- Students are also encouraged to draw a scene in their nature journal from another living thing’s point of view:
  - » How would the playground look if you were a bird on that branch?
  - » How would the school building look to a snail on the ground?
  - » How would the classroom look for a visitor who is new to the school?
  - » How does it make you feel to see the world from another perspective?
  - » Why is it important to think of others’ perspectives? How does this help us to be better global citizens?



### 1.3 Languages (English – Predicting & Inferring):

- Discuss the concept of ‘promises’ with the class using the following prompt questions:
  - a. *What kind of promises do we make in the classroom (e.g. class contracts, school rules)?*
  - b. *How do you feel about these promises?*
  - c. *What kind of promises should we make to nature? Why are these promises important?*
- Show the cover of ‘The Promise’ to the class and ask students to share their predictions about what they think the story might be about. Encourage them to infer based on the title and illustrations what promises the characters might make as you go on a picture walk of the book’s pages (i.e. briefly looking at some or all pictures in the story without reading any of the text while trying to guess what the story might be about). Students’ predictions can be added to a working wall using post its to be revisited having read the story to see how accurate they were.



## 2. During Reading Activities

### 2.1 Languages (English – Literacy & Interactive Storytelling):

- Use props (e.g. old lady’s bag, acorns, empty wallets), gestures, and different voices to bring the story to life as you read aloud to the class. Encourage students to participate by making sound effects, acting out scenes, or predicting what might happen next using the ‘Interactive story-telling prompt questions’ in Appendix 5.

### 2.2 Arts Education (Drama – Character Identification):

Pause at key moments in the story to ask students questions about the characters’ feelings, thoughts, and actions (examples below):

When the girl first tries to steal the old woman’s bag, pause and ask:

- *How do you think the girl feels as she tries to steal the bag? Why might she feel that way?*
- *What do you think is going through her mind when the old woman holds onto the bag?*
- *What would you do if you were in the girl’s situation?*

When the girl plants the first acorn, pause and ask:

- *Why do you think the girl decides to plant the acorn?*
- *How do you think planting the acorn makes the girl feel?*
- *What do you think the girl hopes will happen after she plants it?*

When the city starts to transform because of the trees, pause and ask:

- *How do you think the people in the city feel as they see the trees growing and the city changing?*
- *What changes do you think the girl notices in herself as the city becomes greener?*
- *Why do you think nature, like the trees and plants, is important for the people living in the city?*

Help them identify with the main character's journey and emotions, such as loneliness, hope, and joy through the conscience alley activity below:

**Conscience alley:**

- Students form two rows facing each other (3 metre spacing). One student volunteers to act as a character from the story (e.g. the thief, the old woman, the boy) and slowly walks between the lines. As each student is passed by, they verbalise a thought or feeling that the chosen character might be having at a certain moment in the story. (e.g. p1: Thief as she walks around the dull city. p5: Old woman as she sees the thief approaching. p6: Thief when she realises she has stolen a bag of acorns. p8: Person when the acorns begin to grow and the city is a more colourful place to live).

## 3. Post Reading Activities

### 3.1 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Education (Technology – GCE movie club):

- Watch [‘The Promise’ movie](#) as a class using the following prompt questions as homework, comprehension or consolidation tasks:
  - What do you think happened to the thief at this point in the story? (Pause at 1:28 mins)*
  - Why do you think the old woman held onto her bag so tightly?*
    - What does this tell you about how the old woman views the world?*
  - How did the girl react when she opened the bag of acorns?*
    - Why did she feel lucky? How would you feel if you opened the same bag?*
    - Have you ever felt this way when you opened something?*
  - What else could the thief have done with the acorns? What would you do with a bag of acorns and how would this affect your community?*
  - How did the people in the city change when the acorns grew?*
  - Pause the film at 5mins. What do you think will happen next?*
  - How do you think ‘a heart can change’? (Pause at 5:19min) How can this help other people and the environment?*

### 3.2 Arts education (Art – Nature Crafts):

- Discuss with the class how many of the pictures in ‘The Promise’ are grey, dull and dreary. Print an A2 size sample of each dull page from the book and place on each group table. Using natural materials or recycled newspapers and magazines, students are asked to bring the picture to life with the colours of nature. Students can add images and illustrations of plants and animals and explain their choices.
- Use the completed collages from each table to create a gallery in the classroom, corridor or school hall. Exhibit the colourful collages in contrast to the original dull images. Invite other class groups to experience the exhibition and discuss which view of the city they prefer and their reasoning behind it. Encourage students to act as exhibition guides and to stress the importance of caring for our environment and in being active custodians of the Earth.
- This collage exhibition could also act as a stimulus for a class or whole-school assembly where our role as active citizens in our communities, towns, villages and cities is discussed and contrasted with children’s lives in other places in the world.



### (Art – Nature mandalas):

- Using the natural materials gathered during exercise 1.1/1.2 and the ‘History of Mandalas’ information in appendix 4, students are shown how to make nature mandalas to show gratitude and love to nature individually, in pairs or in groups. Explore the origin and meaning of mandalas and linked to the ‘How do hearts change?’ question from appendix 7 (activity 3.1).



Source: <https://www.orientacionandujar.es/mandalas-naturales-42/>



## 4. Planting Seeds of Hope (Hands-On Gardening)

### 4.1 Science, Technology & Engineering Education Science & Mathematics – Seed Planting

- Provide students with seeds, soil, and pots to plant their own seeds. Seeds are available to buy from [Irish Seed Savers](#) and a list of fast-growing seeds, suitable for any time of the year can be found on the [Seeds Ireland website](#). Guide students in caring for their plants and observing their growth over time. This can take place in pots and egg cartons in the classroom or in pots or flower beds in the school yard. Discuss the importance of planting seeds for a sustainable future, and how plants contribute to the health of the planet. Discuss how this was achieved by the girl in 'The Promise' and how seed planting is an achievable and important task for every student in the class.
- Incorporate Mathematics skills by measuring soil amounts, counting seeds, and tracking the height of their plants. Encourage students to record their observations in a plant diary (suggested sources for plant diary templates in 'Additional Resources').

### 4.2 Social & Environmental Education (History – Folklore):

- Discuss [Irish folklore and the tradition of rag trees](#). Create a promise tree with the class (this can be with a potted plant indoors or with tree on the school grounds). Support each student to make a promise to help protect nature and to encourage global stewardship, just like the main character in 'The Promise' and attach a ribbon to the promise tree to represent that promise.

## 5. Additional links for primary teachers

### 5.1 Laois Forest School padlet:

Age-appropriate resources and outdoor education lesson ideas for every month organised by the wheel of the year.

### 5.2 Links to sample nature crafts:

A range of art activities where students use natural materials such as acorns leaves, twigs, and flowers to create artwork:

1. [Recycled Egg Carton Acorn Ornaments](#)
2. [Acorn collage crafts](#)
3. [Painting acorns](#)
4. [Pebble art](#) and [Pebble people](#)
5. [Stick dolls](#)
6. [Natural minibeasts art photo pack](#)

For offline users, please visit <https://globalvillageschools.ie/teaching-resource/classroomresources/> or scan the QR below to access the online version of this resources with all active resource links:





## Appendix 1:

### 1.1 Sample answers for discussion question, 'How is the environment here (on the island of Ireland) linked to other parts of the world?'

1. **Bird Migration:** Imagine birds like swallows flying all the way from South Africa, cuckoos coming from the Congo and Sedge Warblers from Senegal and Ghana to Ireland during the summer. They travel thousands of kilometres to enjoy the nice weather here. This shows how animals connect different parts of the world!
2. **Weather and Ocean Currents:** The weather in Ireland is affected by something called the Gulf Stream, which is like a giant river in the ocean. It brings warm water from the Caribbean all the way to Ireland, making our weather milder. So, even though the Caribbean is far away, it still affects the weather here!
3. **Plant and Animal Species:** Some plants and animals that live in Ireland originally came from other countries. For example, potatoes, which are a big part of Irish food, originally came from South America! And some animals, like deer, were brought here a long time ago by people. Red and Fallow deer were introduced from Britain while Sika deer were brought from Japan. This shows how plants and animals can travel and live in different places around the world.
4. **Pollution and Climate Change:** When we use cars or factories in Ireland, we create pollution that can affect the air and the climate not only here but also in other parts of the world. So, by taking care of our environment, we can help people and animals everywhere have a better world to live in.

## Appendix 2a

### 1.2 Nature scavenger hunt printable sheet to laminate prior to session (see page 14)

## Appendix 2b:

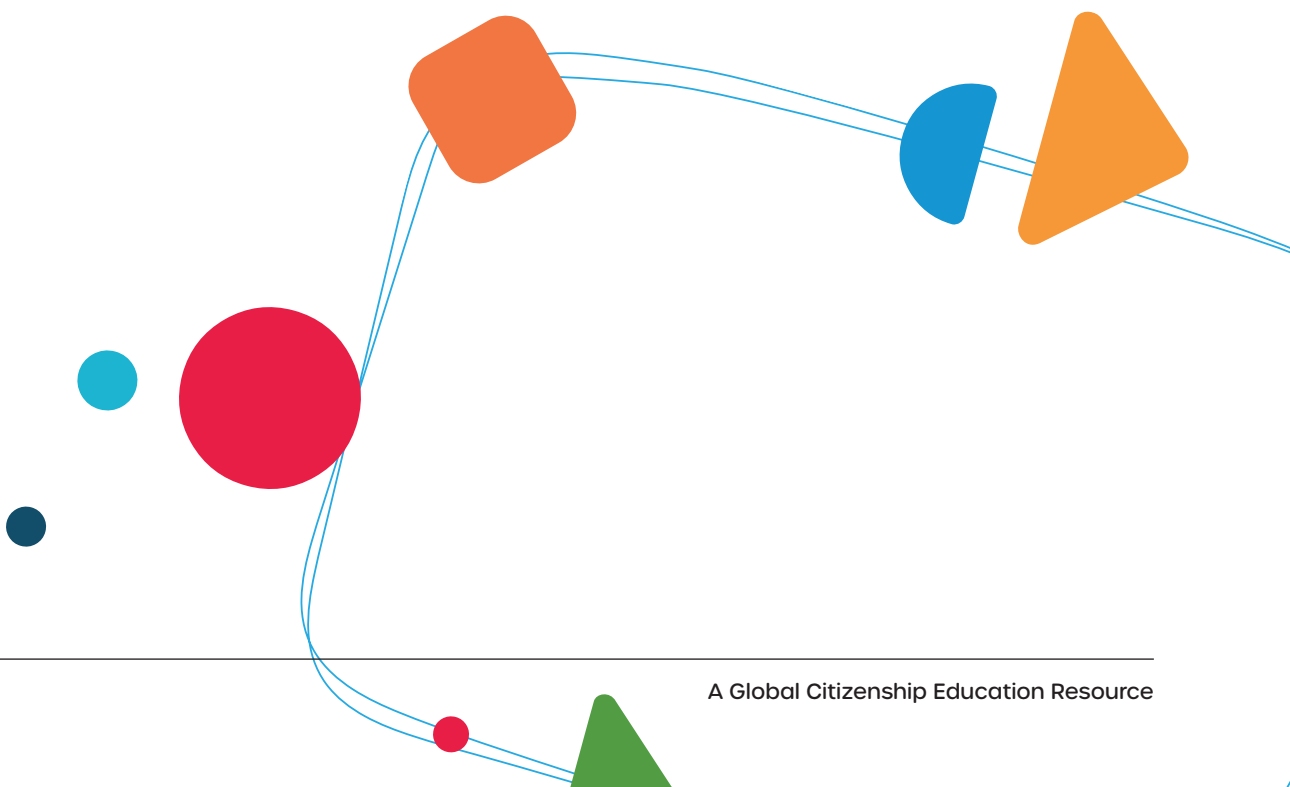
### 1.2 Sample answers for nature scavenger hunt objects' significance in nature and role in the local and global ecosystem

1. **Leaf:** Leaves are like tiny solar panels for plants! They soak up sunlight and turn it into food through a process called photosynthesis. They also help plants breathe by taking in carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, which is very important for all living things on Earth.
2. **Flower:** Flowers are like nature's artists! They come in all shapes and colours, and their job is to attract insects like bees and butterflies. When insects visit flowers for nectar, they also pick up pollen and help plants make seeds. This is how flowers play a big part in making sure plants can grow and make more flowers.
3. **Tree:** Trees are like nature's superheroes! They provide us with oxygen to breathe, shade to keep us cool, and homes for many animals. Trees also soak up carbon dioxide, which helps keep the air clean and reduces the effects of climate change. They're essential for life on Earth!
4. **Earthworm:** Earthworms are like nature's gardeners! They live underground and eat dead leaves and plants. As they move through the soil, they help break down organic matter and turn it into rich, nutrient-filled soil called compost. This helps plants grow big and strong!
5. **Ant:** Ants are like tiny engineers! They live in colonies and work together to build intricate tunnels and nests underground. They also help clean up the environment by eating dead insects and plants. Plus, they're important for spreading seeds and aerating the soil as they tunnel through it.

6. **Bird:** Birds are like nature's messengers! They spread seeds when they eat fruits and berries, helping plants grow in new places. They also control insect populations by eating bugs that might harm crops or plants. And let's not forget their beautiful songs, which make our world a happier place!
7. **Spider web:** Spider webs are like nature's traps! Spiders use their silk to spin intricate webs to catch insects for food. They help control the insect population, which is important for keeping ecosystems in balance. Plus, spider silk is super strong and can be used for lots of cool things in science and technology!
8. **Dandelion:** Dandelions are like nature's helpers! They have deep roots that break up compacted soil, allowing air and water to reach plant roots. They also provide food for bees and other insects with their nectar and pollen. And let's not forget how fun they are to blow and make wishes on!
9. **Nettle:** Nettles are like nature's medicine! Despite their sting, they have many uses. They provide food for caterpillars, which turn into beautiful butterflies. People can also use nettles to make tea or soup, which can be good for our health. Plus, they help improve soil quality by pulling up nutrients from deep underground.
10. **Daisy:** Daisies are like nature's cheerleaders! They brighten up fields and gardens with their cheerful yellow and white petals. Bees and butterflies love visiting them for nectar, and they also provide food for grazing animals. Daisies remind us to appreciate the simple beauty of nature.
11. **Rocks:** Rocks are like Earth's storytellers! They hold clues about the history of our planet and how it has changed over millions of years. Some rocks, like fossils, preserve evidence of ancient plants and animals. Rocks also shape the landscape, forming mountains, valleys, and beaches. They provide habitats for many living things, including plants and small animals. Plus, humans use rocks for building materials and making tools. Rocks remind us of the incredible journey our planet has taken through time.

## Appendix 3

### 1.3 Nature journal template (see page 15)



## Appendix 4

### 1.3 History of Mandalas

**1. Where have you ever seen something like a mandala before? Describe it.**

**2. What is a mandala, and where did it originate?**

A mandala is a circular design that represents the universe in various spiritual traditions. It originated in ancient India as a symbol of the universe's wholeness, unity, harmony and peace. *(Can we find India on a map? Has anyone ever been to India?)*

**3. How are mandalas used in different cultures around the world?**

Mandalas are used in different cultures for meditation, spiritual rituals, and as decorative art. They can be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Indigenous American traditions, and more. *(Do you know anyone who follows and/or practices any of these religions/traditions?)*

**4. Can you name any famous examples of mandalas from different countries or traditions?**

Examples include the Sand Mandala from Tibetan Buddhism, Rangoli from Hindu traditions, the Rose Window in Gothic architecture, and the Medicine Wheel in Indigenous American cultures.

**5. What do mandalas symbolize in various cultures?**

Mandalas symbolise unity, harmony, balance, and the interconnectedness of all things.

**6. How do people create mandalas? What materials do they use?**

People create mandalas using various materials such as coloured sand, paint, chalk, stones, flowers, and even digital tools. They often start from the centre and work outward in intricate patterns.

**7. Why do you think mandalas are important in certain spiritual or religious practices?**

Mandalas are important in spiritual practices because they help individuals focus and calm their minds, cultivate mindfulness, and connect with deeper spiritual meanings. They serve as visual aids for meditation and reflection.

**8. How do mandalas promote mindfulness and inner peace?**

By focusing on making mandalas, we can quiet our minds and reduce worry. Repeating patterns and making matching (symmetrical) designs help to calm thoughts and feel peaceful.

**9. What are some ways mandalas are used in art and everyday objects?**

Mandalas are used into paintings, sculptures, murals, textiles, jewellery, and things like windows and ceilings. They can be found in temples, sacred spaces, and even household items like plates and coasters.

**10. How do you think learning about mandalas can help us understand different cultures and promote global citizenship?**

Learning about mandalas teaches us about diverse cultures, other people's beliefs, and art from around the world. It encourages us to appreciate cultural diversity, fosters empathy and understanding, and promotes the values of global citizenship such as respect, tolerance, and interconnectedness.

## Appendix 5

### 2.1 Interactive storytelling prompts:

#### Introduction:

- Can you guess what “The Promise” might be about based on the title?
- What do you think might happen in the story?

#### Setting the Scene:

- How do you think the main character feels at the beginning of the story?
- Describe what the girl’s village might look, smell, feel and sound like.
- Describe where you live to your partner; is it similar or different to the girl in the story?

#### Sound Effects:

- Can you make the sound of the city?
- What sound would the animals make when they’re scared or excited?
- Can you make the sound of the wind blowing through trees?

#### Character Exploration:

- How do you think the thief feels when she sees the old woman with a large bag?
- Why do you think the old woman eventually gives the thief the bag of acorns?
- What would you do with a bag of acorns in your community?

#### Predicting Outcomes:

- What do you think will happen to the city if the thief plants the acorns?
- How do you think the wildlife will react to the changes in the city?
- How do you think new trees could benefit the people living in the city?

#### Acting Out Scenes:

- Can you pretend to be the thief, planting the acorns in the city? Think about all of the places they could be planted.
- How would the wildlife react to all of the new trees being planted in the city? (Act out the animals finding new homes in the new city with lots of trees)

#### Emotional Connection:

- How do you feel when you see the city becoming more colourful and healthy because of the thief’s actions?
- Why do you think the thief made the promise to the old woman?

#### Reflective Thinking:

- What lesson do you think the author wants us to learn from “The Promise”?
- How can we make promises to help our environment or community like the thief did?
- Why is it important to care for our environment?





## Nature Scavenger Hunt

*Remember, we leave no trace when we're exploring in nature and we only take a sample of a plant if it's not the last one there.*

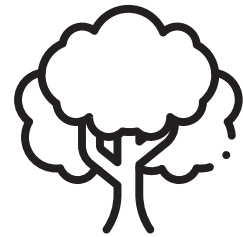
Leaf



Flower



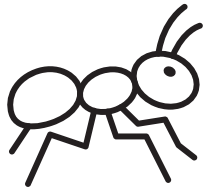
Tree



Earthworm



Ant



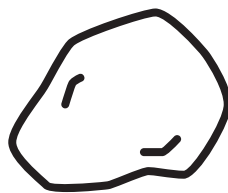
Bird



Spider web



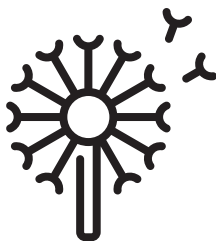
Rough rock



Smooth rock



Dandelion



Nettle



Daisy



# Nature Journal Template

This nature journal belongs to:



My favourite animal: .....

My favourite plant: .....

My favourite colour: .....

My favourite season: .....

The thing I love most about nature is: .....

.....

My favourite place in nature:

.....

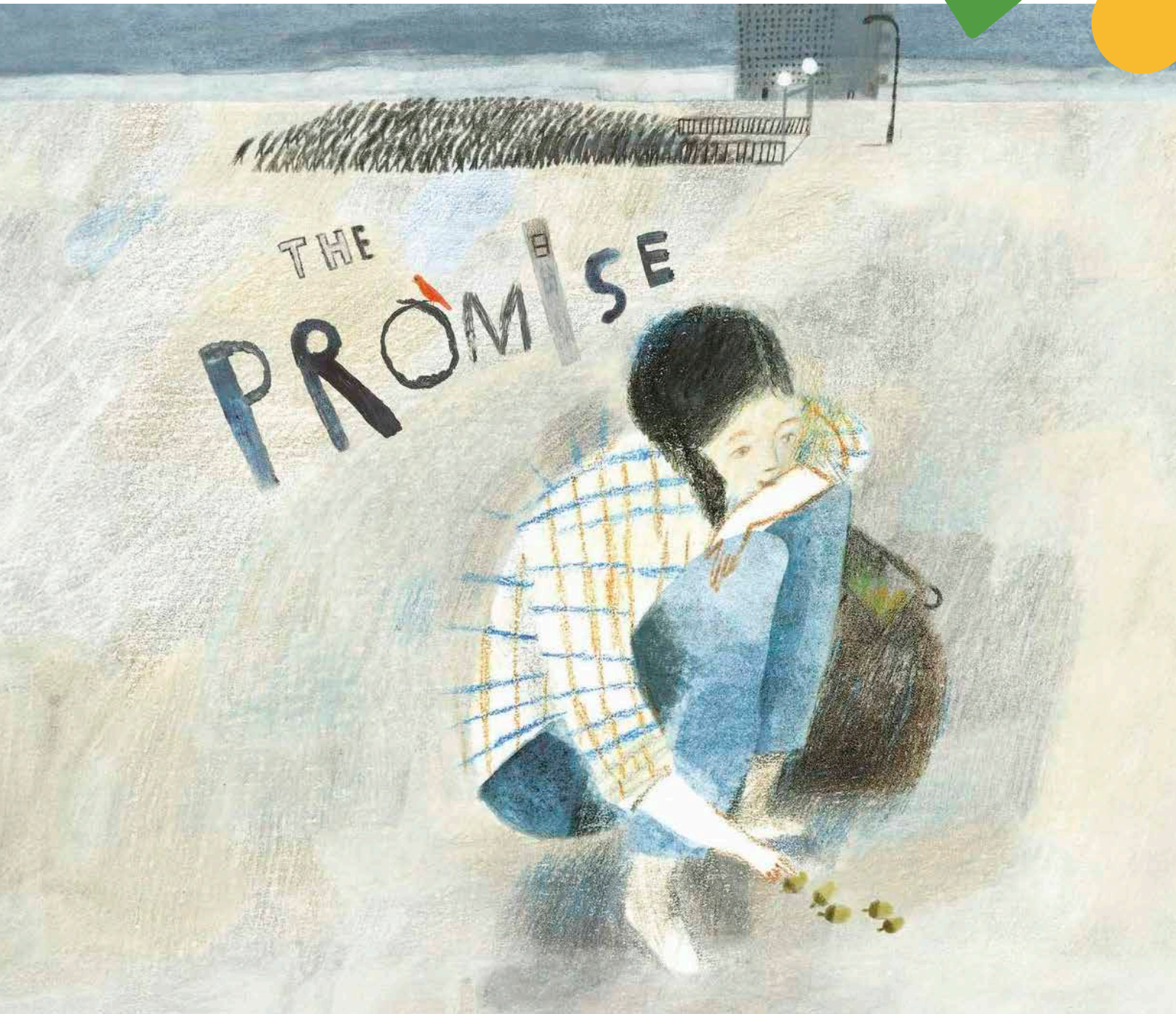
.....

On a blank page, choose one of the following activities to complete:

- What I think nature feels/tastes/sounds like:
- My nature rubbings:
- My nature collage:
- My drawing from a living thing's point of view:
- Pictures of what I found outside today:
- My drawing of how I want the Earth to look:
- Trace Draw one half of each of the objects below. Hand your drawing to your partner to draw the other half:
  - Butterfly
  - Flower
  - Tree
  - Rainbow







For more information on Global Village resources and offerings, visit our [website](#) or email us at [info@globalvillageschools.ie](mailto:info@globalvillageschools.ie).

