

A Question of Fraternity

A thematic unit proposed by **Réseau Canopé**

A unit by Marie-Jo Lantam Ninsao

Teaching with cinema

4 short films with a total running time of 11 minutes.

Shark Attached

Ashley Farlow, United States, 2014

Buildings

Tomoyoshi Joko, Japan, 2018

The Best Toy

Gabriel Lin, United States, 2014

Sisters

Anchi Shen, United States, 2014



A Question of Fraternity

by Marie-Jo Lantam Ninsao

What everyday reality does the word "fraternity" cover for young children? How can it be understood, and how can it be put into practice in the classroom, in the school and in everyday life? What words can we use to talk about emotions? Who are the others? How can we put ourselves in someone else's place? These are all essential subjects to address in order to better understand the words "living together" and to give meaning to the word "fraternity".



Children, Auguste Renoir, 1900. MET

Overview

Aim of the unit

The aim of this unit is to nourish reflection on the third fundamental value of the French Republic: fraternity.

The Official Bulletin states that "moral and civic education pursues three closely interconnected aims:

- respecting others;
- acquiring and sharing the values of the Republic;
- building a civic culture.

The morality taught at school is a civic morality closely linked to the principles and values of republican and democratic citizenship. The adjective 'moral' in moral and civic education refers to the goal of pupils making their own the principles that guarantee respect for others. This morality rests on awareness of the dignity and integrity of the human person, whether oneself or others, and requires the existence of a framework defining everyone's rights and duties¹.

To this end, school offers a "culture of sensitivity [that] makes it possible to identify and express what one feels, as well as to understand what others feel." These four short films make it possible to approach these themes from a variety of angles, with humour and sensitivity.

1 Official Bulletin No. 30 of 26 July 2018 - The aims of moral and civic education.

2 Id.

3 Id.

Context

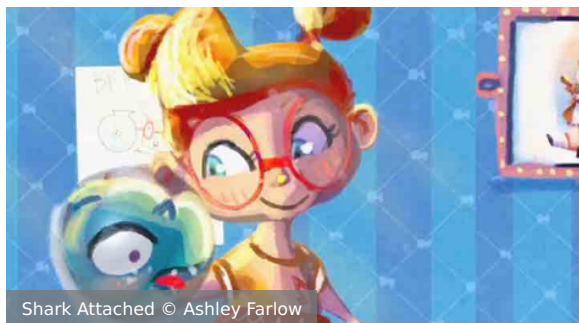
"Moral and civic education is carried out, whenever possible, on the basis of the analysis of concrete situations. Structured discussion and reasoned debate have pride of place in enabling pupils to understand, experience and put into perspective the values that govern our democratic society. They involve gathering information according to the methods chosen by the teacher²."

The reflection prompted by analysing the films, and pursued during the debates, places pupils in an active, engaged position, helping them build a point of view of their own and develop their ability to recognise that of others.

"Moral and civic education lends itself particularly well to work that places pupils in situations of cooperation and pooling, fostering the exchange of arguments and the confrontation of ideas³."

Presentation of the short films

4 short films with a total running time of 11 minutes.



Shark Attached © Ashley Farlow

« **Shark Attached** » is the story of a little girl and her pet. Nothing unusual in itself — except that this pet is a small shark living in a very small bowl! Maggie plays with her pet, takes it out for walks... But is it happy? Is little Maggie aware of her shark's needs, and will she be able to meet them?

Direction: Ashley Farlow · Production: CalArts, United States, 2014 · 2D animation, 2 min 12 s

« **Buildings** » takes a metaphorical and original approach to the theme of difference and exclusion. It takes us to a city where the buildings are characters that all look alike. One day, a new building appears: taller and more beautiful, it towers over all the others. We sense it is full of pride, arrogant — and very lonely too — until the day a flood threatens to engulf everything. It then decides to save all the houses around it by moving them onto an island.

2D animation, 5 min · Direction: Tomoyoshi Joko · Production: Decovocal, Japan, 2018



Buildings © Decovocal

« **The Best Toy** » deals with the influence of other people's opinions and the importance of self-confidence. Influenced by the way others look at him, a little boy tries to transform his toy. He wants to please his friends and gets caught up in a game of one-upmanship and escalation, but is none the happier for it. He will come to understand that staying true to himself is ultimately the best solution, and will gain greater self-confidence from it.

Direction: Gabriel Lin · Production: CalArts, United States, 2014 · 2D animation, 2 min 46 s



The Best Toy © Gabriel Lin

« **Sisters** » tells the story of a little girl who wants to give her big sister a present — but the big sister is, alas, on the phone. This funny and tender short film echoes a situation everyone has experienced or endured, including very young pupils. It invites older pupils to reflect on the omnipresence of new means of communication and on the nuisance caused by excessive phone use.

2D animation, 1 min 32 s · Direction: Anchi Shen · Production: CalArts, United States, 2014



Sisters © Amix Film Studio

Thematic and cinematographic analysis

These silent short films opt for humour and allegory to approach a value that is sometimes vague for young pupils: fraternity.

With their different aesthetics and highly distinctive artistic choices, they always lead the viewer to:

- imagine, make inferences, interpret, seek to construct meaning;
- identify and project themselves, show sensitivity and empathy, feel and be moved;
- build their own thinking and develop an opinion;
- observe a filmic work, identify its artistic features, make connections and link it to other familiar works (music, literature, painting...) by drawing on a shared culture.

Pedagogical implementation

Analysing the films will contribute to building an initial sensitivity to moral experiences (feelings of empathy, expressing what is fair and unfair, questioning stereotypes...). The staging of fictional characters through humour or allegory creates opportunities for identification while at the same time ensuring sufficient distance.

The objective is to construct meaning from what is seen in order to develop interpretation skills and the ability to express oneself and debate, moving towards more specific knowledge, increasing pupils' autonomy, developing their capacity to judge for themselves, and giving them tools for decentring (self and others).

The pedagogical implementation should make it possible to explore certain essential aspects of the films in depth, working in sequences that sometimes bring several films together according to their common features and to targeted objectives.

4 Sequences

Sequence 1: Moral and civic education (EMC)

Debates and the moral dilemma.

Sequence 2: EMC, French

Understanding a story and writing it as a comic strip.

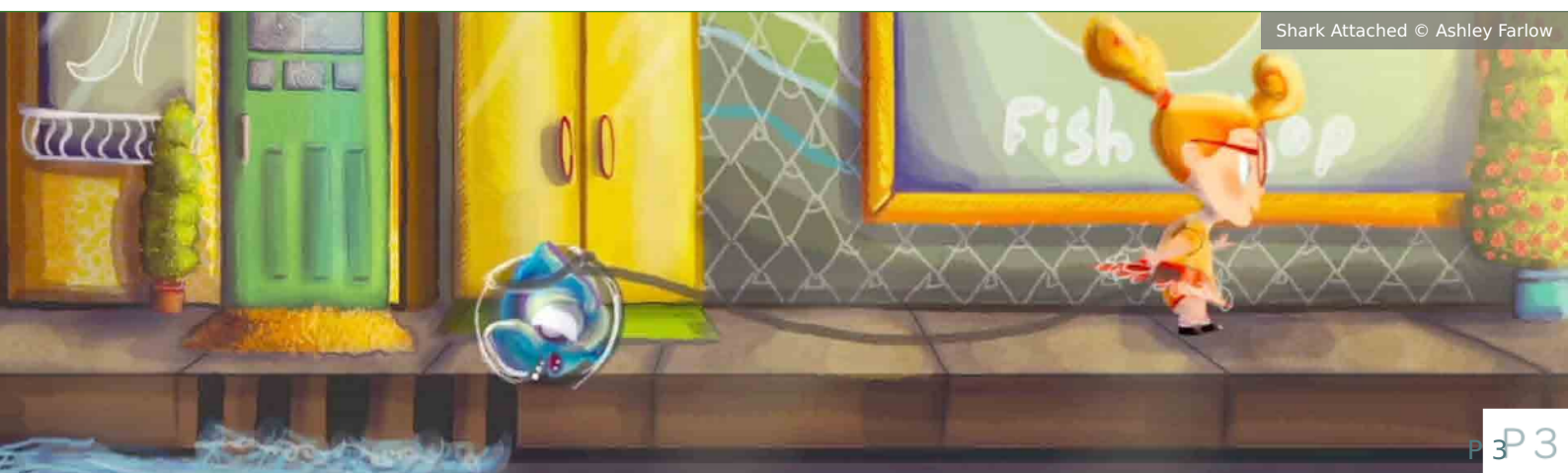
Commitment and solidarity.

Sequence 3: EMC

Setting up a conflict-resolution tool: the clear message.

Sequence 4: Sustainable development education (EDD)

Fraternity in action.

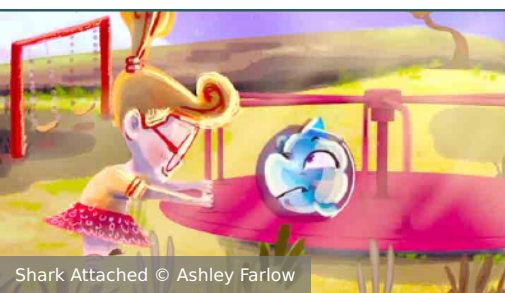


Sequence 1: Respecting others.

Debates and the moral dilemma (EMC)

« **Shark Attached** » and « **Sisters** » have several points in common. Both are silent, and both present an everyday situation that pupils can easily identify and project themselves into. This will make it possible to organise one or more debates on the notions of individual responsibility, commitment, fraternity and solidarity.

In both cases, it is the relationship with others that is called into question. How do we take care of the one we claim to love, even if it is an animal? What are the needs of those around us? For each of the main characters, understanding the needs of the one they claim to love does not come immediately. Maggie adores her little shark, but this love is overwhelming, and it will take her time to realise that her pet wants something other than what she offers it. In « **Sisters** », the big sister, entirely absorbed in her phone conversation, no longer sees her little sister and fails to notice her gesture towards her. All of these are avenues of reflection to offer pupils.



Shark Attached © Ashley Farlow

Skills

- . Adopt responsible behaviour towards oneself and others.
- . Honour commitments made to oneself and to others.
- . Identify and share emotions and feelings.

1. Viewing and oral discussion

Recount what happens and express what you feel, varying the points of view. What does the shark feel? Why does the big sister not see her sister's sadness? Reflect on the notions of responsibility and commitment.

2. Debate No. 1

Based on a few extracts from the two films, propose questions in the form of a moral dilemma offering pupils two answers, neither of which is right or fair a priori. They must make a choice and justify it⁴.

In « **Shark Attached** », when Maggie takes her shark to the park and spins it around at high speed, pupils can answer the following questions:

- Should Maggie entertain her shark?
- What are the essential questions to ask yourself when you have a pet?

In « **Sisters** », the questions could be: Who comes first — the person who is physically present, or the person on the phone? Should the younger sister have walked away?

3. Debate No. 2

Drawing on our own experience: who in our familiar environment requires specific care and attention? Have we ever become aware of inappropriate behaviour on our part towards an animal, a friend or an elderly person? How did we act after becoming aware of it?

4. Debate No. 3

What is fraternity? Think about a definition of fraternity and look for the moments in the two films when the protagonists behave "fraternally". Watch the final part of each film again to answer the question: What do the characters feel when they take the other's needs into account?

Conclude by asking pupils to write a short text describing a real-life situation in which they experienced the joy of having helped someone.

⁴ "Moral dilemmas, a method for ethical development" (Éduscol):

cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/EMC/01/3/ress_emc_dilemmes_ethique_464013.pdf



Sisters © Amix Film Studio

Sequence 2: Showing solidarity.

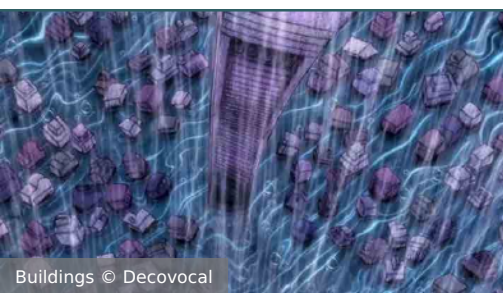
Understanding a story and writing it as a comic strip (French)

Commitment and solidarity (EMC)

Drawing a comic strip (Artistic practices and history of the arts)

« **Buildings** » is a metaphor for our differences. It questions us about the relationships we have with those who do not resemble us. This film opens up the question of the "common good". Pupils "are made aware of the notion of the common good. They adopt responsible behaviour towards themselves, towards others and towards their immediate and wider environment. In concrete situations, they are invited to make and honour moral commitments⁵".

Creating a collective comic strip will deepen understanding of the story, allow pupils to analyse the characters' feelings and imagine their exchanges, and unite the class around a shared project.



Buildings © Decovocal

Skills

- . Adopt responsible behaviour towards oneself and others.
- . Accept and respect differences in one's relationship to otherness and to others.
- . Be able to cooperate.
- . Feel part of a community.
- . Produce a piece of creative writing within a literary genre from the curriculum, ensuring its coherence and observing the main conventions of the language.
- . Encourage expression and creativity.
- . Practise drawing; produce still images.

1.

Watch the film, followed by an oral discussion and questioning phase: summarise the story, give opinions on the key moments, debate the commitment made by the main character.

2.

Collectively produce a synopsis of the film; describe the characters and draw up an identity card for each of them and their feelings at each stage. Enrich the vocabulary used to express feelings by making a table (joy, fear, anger, sadness) and listing all the related words according to their intensity.

3.

Form working groups. Each group takes ownership of one of the film's key moments in order to imagine and write the characters' thoughts and emotions, and any dialogue. Pool the work regularly to adjust the content of each team's production.

4.

Practise drawing the characters, but also the wide shots.

5.

Create the comic strip: each group produces a page combining the drawings, texts and dialogue in the chronological order of the film. Produce a finished book for each pupil.

⁵ Official Bulletin No. 30 of 26 July 2018 - The aims of moral and civic education.

⁶ The clear message is a verbal exchange between two pupils aimed at resolving their minor conflicts. cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/EMC/03/2/Ress_emc_conflits_messages_clairs_509032.pdf

Sequence 3: The clear message

Setting up a conflict-resolution tool: the clear message⁶ (EMC)

« **The Best Toy** » is a valuable starting point for addressing the theme of "Knowing and recognising the basic emotions (fear, anger, sadness, joy)" and that of communication. Communicating means exchanging objective information, but also sharing feelings and emotions. It means being able to set aside self-centred behaviour in order to embrace points of view other than one's own and to show empathy. That is precisely what the film's characters fail to do — which breeds frustration, sadness and loneliness.

Education in expressing emotions, feelings and values involves developing specific skills, particularly language and cross-curricular skills, and methodically learning techniques that teach pupils to identify and express their emotions and feelings while regulating them, so that they can resolve their everyday disagreements and minor conflicts on their own and "learn to live well together".

1.

Watch the film and hold oral discussions about the emotions felt by the main character at various key moments in the film. List the words that express well-being and the words that can describe negative feelings.

2.

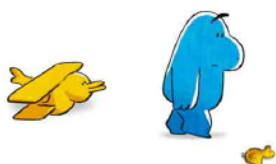
Ask pupils to illustrate this vocabulary in short sentences such as "I am happy when..." or "I am angry when...", in which they describe situations they have experienced. These sentences are then read out to the whole class; everyone listens and reflects on them.

3.

Explain that to live well together, we must be able to say what we feel through clear messages, but also listen to others without judging or criticising them. Returning to the situations evoked in the film, practise writing clear messages and acting them out.

4.

Formalise the use of clear messages in the times devoted to establishing the class rules.



The Best Toy © Gabriel Lin

Skills

- . Identify and express one's emotions and feelings while regulating them.
- . Use the vocabulary suited to expressing them.
- . Value oneself and be capable of listening and empathy.
- . Respect others and accept differences.
- . Gradually acquire responsible behaviour and become more autonomous.



Sisters © Amix Film Studio

Sequence 4: Fraternity in action

"Pupils' commitment in the classroom and in the school builds on cooperation with the aim of carrying out a collective project, on their involvement in school life, and on their participation in educational initiatives and days of remembrance. Pupils gradually learn to distinguish between individual interest and the general interest in concrete situations⁷."

The reflection carried out on the basis of these short films will lead each pupil to consider what actions can be put in place so that the word "fraternity" takes on the face of a tangible reality.

1.

On the occasion of Europe Day, celebrated on 9 May, reflect on the meaning of the word "fraternity". In what way are all human beings brothers and sisters? Make the link with the words "equality" and "discrimination". Following a discussion on this theme, propose writing a short text in the form of an acrostic and creating posters for the school illustrating the word "fraternity".

2.

In PE, propose cooperative games that will allow further reflection on the notions of solidarity, respect and team spirit.

3.

As part of the "Learning to give first aid" training, model gestures and behaviours aimed at taking care of others.

4.

Draw up a list of the social organisations working in the area around the school. Organise meetings and exchanges with the people who run them.

Prepare presentations on the missions and actions of these organisations (the French Red Cross, L'École à l'hôpital, Les Restos du cœur, SOS Racisme).

Commit to carrying out a collective action in partnership with an organisation.

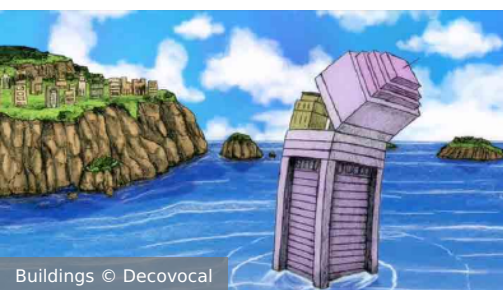
⁷ Official Bulletin No. 30 of 26 July 2018 - The aims of moral and civic education.



The Best Toy © Gabriel Lin

Skills

- . Be responsible for one's own commitments.
- . Be responsible towards others.
- . Get involved and take on responsibilities in the school.
- . Take charge of aspects of collective life and the environment, and develop a civic conscience.
- . Know how to take part in a collaborative approach and enrich one's work or thinking through it.



Buildings © Decovocal

Extensions and links with the Arts

Cross-curricular resources.

Children at Play, Xia Kui, 15th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art



The artistic, cultural and sporting domains foster democracy, the taking of responsibility, and personal and collective commitment through participatory practices; they make it possible to grasp what empathy, cooperation and mutual aid are.

Linking moral and civic education with literature develops "languages for thinking and communicating orally and in writing", provides "methods and tools for learning" and contributes to "the formation of the citizen".

This can be done through the study of children's books such as:

- **Grosse colère**, by Mireille d'Allancé (École des Loisirs, Cycles 1 and 2), in which Robert tames the monster of his "great big anger".
- **Jean de la Lune** (Moon Man)⁸, by Tomi Ungerer (École des Loisirs, Cycle 2), in which Moon Man is hunted down when he arrives on Earth. The question of differences and prejudice: why are we sometimes afraid of people who are different?
- **Le Chien invisible**, by Claude Ponti (École des Loisirs, Cycles 2 and 3), in which the invisible dog can only become Oum-Popotte's friend once Oum-Popotte gives him a name, thereby recognising him as a person in his own right, singular and unique. The question of respect for others.

Find more resources on Éduscol for primary school:

Moral and civic education (EMC) curriculum:

education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=132982

"Glossary" factsheet:

cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/EMC/02/5/Ress_emc_glossaire_464025.pdf

"The structured (or reasoned) debate" factsheet:

cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/EMC/01/1/ress_emc_debat_464011.pdf

⁸ The film Jean de la Lune is available free of charge on the website "Aux films, citoyens !": reseau-canope.fr/notice/jean-de-la-lune.html



Extensions and links with the Arts

Cross-curricular resources.

Fifteen Naked Children Dancing, Heinrich Aldegrever, 1555. Cleveland Museum of Art



Artistic and cultural education gives pupils shared references. Its purpose is to cultivate an attitude of curiosity and creativity. In doing so, it fosters the awareness that artistic and cultural experiences have something universal about them, in the same way as emotions, feelings and values.

An artistic project around the portrait, for example, will contribute to raising awareness of each person's singularity (in order to build the principle of equality).

Each pupil will produce several self-portraits using different techniques (a photograph cut up and reassembled, painting on a photograph in the manner of Andy Warhol, silhouettes in the manner of Keith Haring...).

These portraits will then be gathered in an individual album. One of the portraits will be used to create a mural, "Me and the Others", symbolising living together in the class or in the school.

PE contributes to an "appropriation through action" of the skills expected in moral and civic education, thanks to the collective experiences it gives pupils. During these experiences, pupils develop not only knowledge but also know-how and interpersonal skills.

This subject also encourages interaction between pupils, makes it possible to develop attitudes of mutual aid that contribute to living better together, establishes new modes of communication and highlights the value of carrying out a collective project.

On the platform "Les valeurs de la République", resources on fraternity:
reseau-canope.fr/les-valeurs-de-la-republique/fraternite.html

Place d'Engave, Peter Hansen, 1907, MET

