



Social Emotional Skills Activity Toolkit

Example Stories No.1

To read and adapt for different needs and then create new stories to be shared

These stories have been 'acquired' from the wonderful **UK Social Emotional Aspects of Learning pack** and that is a story in itself. We thank the authors and teachers who helped to develop these resources originally and hope that they agree that the best thing to do with a good story is 'pass it on'.

Introduction:

These stories may be about places and things that might be strange to you but they are about children just like you. In these stories the children find ways to solve problems and sometimes they will ask for your help. You might find that they have similar problems to you or their problems may be completely different from the ones you have. We hope you can think of things that they could that would help them.

These are stories from around the world and they are intended to help children and young people to find your way through difficult times. Perhaps you have your own story to tell ? If so you might want to share it and add to the stories to this collection.

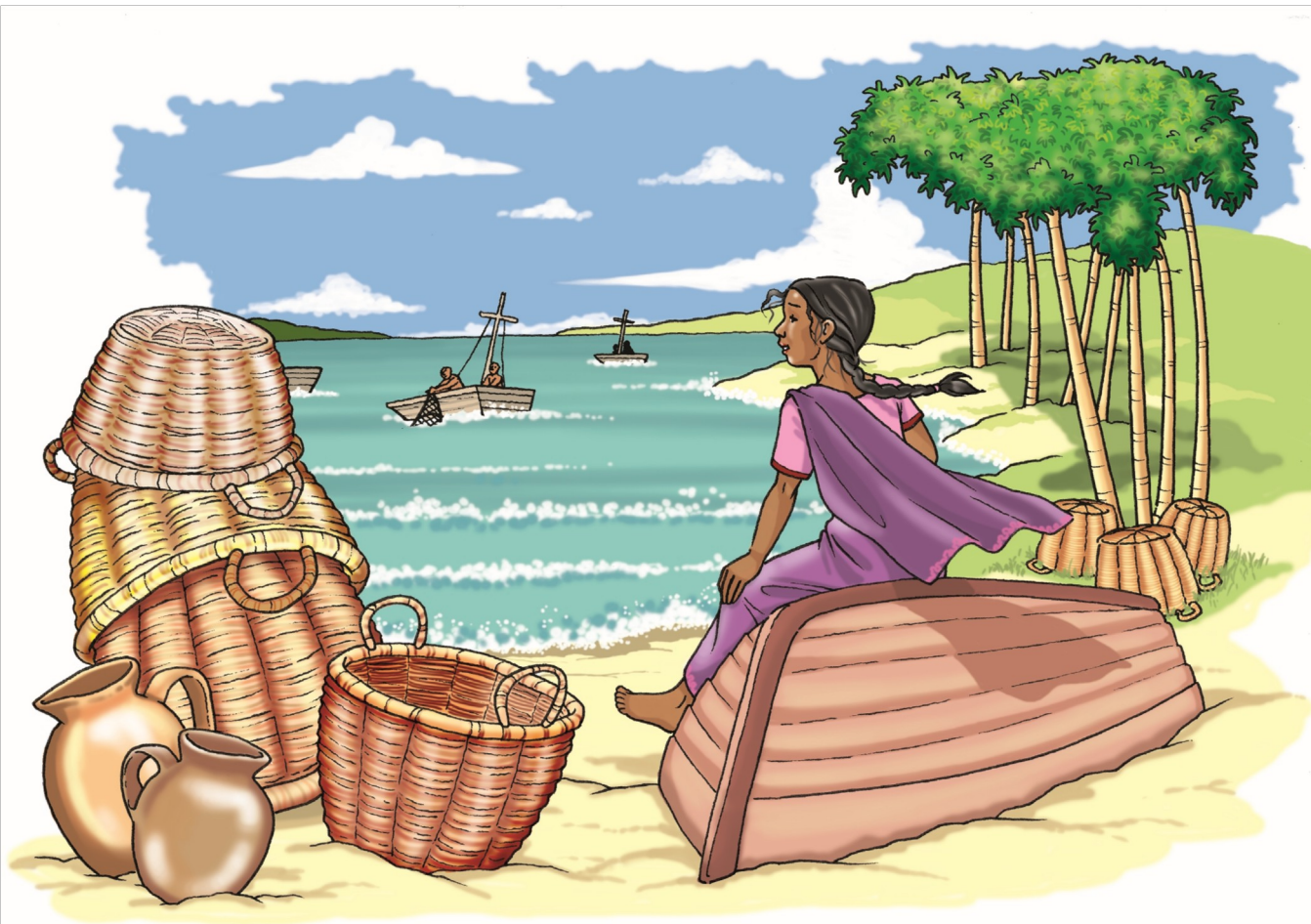
If you do not want to share your story that is okay too. Remember, you can always talk to an adult **you can trust** if you need help or are unhappy.

Going for Goals: Laxshmi's Story

Tell the children that the story they are going to hear is about a girl called Laxshmi who wanted to do something different from all the other girls. Ask them to think very hard about what it is that helps Laxshmi and what makes it difficult for her.

The story

Once upon a time a fisherman and his wife lived with their daughter Laxshmi in a village by the sea. Every day Laxshmi's father went fishing in his boat like all the other men and boys. Every day, like all the other women and girls, Laxshmi and her mother built up the fires and hung the fish over them to smoke. Then they packed the smoked fish in baskets ready for the market.



One moonlit night when Laxshmi was walking on the beach and gazing out at the sea, she sighed a heavy sigh and said, 'Oh, how I wish I could be a fisherman like father and go out to sea every day instead of smoking the fish and taking them to market.'

No sooner had Laxshmi spoken than she heard a strange, soft, whispering sound all around her. It was almost as though there were words in the air.

'Who is there?' cried Laxshmi, looking around. She listened as hard as she could.

'I can hear words,' she said. 'Words are coming from the sea.'

As she listened, Laxshmi gradually understood what the words were. It seemed as though the sea was saying very softly, over and over again, **'Try, Laxshmi, try. Try, Laxshmi, try.'**

As whispered words filled the air around her, Laxshmi seemed to feel courage building up inside her. 'Perhaps I should try and be what I want to be, instead of just wishing,' she said to herself, 'and I think I'll start right now.'

That very night Laxshmi said to her mother and father, 'I want to learn how to be a fisherman like father. I don't want to smoke the fish and go to market.'

'What nonsense,' her parents said. 'Girls don't go to sea and catch the fish. It's men and boys who do that.'

Whatever Laxshmi said, her parents would not listen. When she went to bed she felt very miserable.

'It's no good,' she said, 'I'll never be able to be what I want.' But as she spoke, the whispering came from over the sea again. Laxshmi listened carefully.

This time the words were different. **'Don't give up. Don't give up,'** the sea seemed to be saying. As she fell asleep, the words whispered through her dreams. 'Don't give up. Don't give up.'

Laxshmi did not give up. She worked hard to smoke the fish and help her mother take them to market, but every day she told her parents what she really wanted to be, and every day they said, 'Don't be so silly, Laxshmi. Why can't you be like the other girls?'

Each night when Laxshmi went to bed she felt very miserable. 'I'll never be what I want to be,' she said. But each night the sea whispered to her, **'Don't give up. Don't give up,'** and gave her courage to keep on trying.

And then, at last, one wonderful morning, Laxshmi's father said to her, 'All right then Laxshmi, if you really want to, today you can come to sea with me and learn how to manage the boat and catch the fish. But it won't be easy, you must listen hard and do what I tell you to do.'

'I will, I will,' said Laxshmi, almost bursting with excitement.

It was very hard work learning how to be a fisherman. Laxshmi's hands became sore from pulling on the ropes and her muscles ached. But each day she learned something new. She loved being out on the wide open sea, and tried very hard to help her father and do everything he showed her.



At the end of a week her mother and father said to her, 'You have worked hard, Laxshmi, and shown that you will be a good fisherman in time. But once other people know what you are doing they will think it's strange. They may be angry or they may laugh at you. You will have to learn not to mind.'

The next day when Laxshmi and her father were hauling the fish from their boat, the people gathered round. Some of them were angry.

'Why has Laxshmi been out to sea?' they shouted. 'She's a girl. Her job is to smoke the fish.' Others laughed at her.

'Laxshmi is turning into a boy,' they said. Even Laxshmi's best friend, Haroun, laughed at her.

'You look very silly trying to be a fisherman,' he said.

Laxshmi's cheeks burned. She felt like crying. She felt like leaving the fish and going back to the house to her mother, but she remembered the words the sea had whispered to her,



'Try Laxshmi, try. Try, Laxshmi, try. Don't give up. Don't give up.' She remembered that she was doing what she really wanted to do. So instead of crying or losing her temper, she just ignored Haroun and the other people and carried on helping her father.

As the weeks and months went by Laxshmi became more and more skilled at sailing the boat and catching the fish. She seemed to know where all the best fish were and her father's boat was always full. Gradually, everyone, even Haroun, got used to her going out to sea and forgot to be angry or laugh at her. Laxshmi was proud of herself. She worked very hard, but she was happier than she had ever been in her life.

One evening when she was walking on the beach, Haroun came to see her.

'I'm sorry I laughed at you when you first went out to sea,' he said. 'I think you were brave to do what you've done. I wish I could do what I really want to do.' 'I thought you wanted to be a fisherman,' said Laxshmi, surprised.

'Well I don't,' said Haroun. 'I don't like going out to sea, it's so lonely. What I would like to do is learn how to smoke the fish and take them to market where I can meet lots of people, but I'll never be able to because I'm a boy and I have to be a fisherman.' Laxshmi smiled at him.

'Of course you can do it if you believe you can,' she said. 'You just have to keep on trying and never, ever give up.'

Now explore the children's thoughts and feelings about the story. The questions are increasingly complex so you can target them at appropriate age groups. Explain that most of them do not have a right or wrong answer.

What do you think Laxshmi wanted more than anything else?

Can you remember the words that helped her?



What do you think made Laxshmi sometimes want to give up?

Why do you think she didn't give up?

What was the first, small step Laxshmi took to achieve what she wanted to achieve?

Why do you think some of the villagers were angry about Laxshmi becoming a fisherman?

In what ways do you think Haroun could have been a better friend to Laxshmi?

What do you think Haroun did after the end of the story?

Conclusion

Remind the children that Laxshmi did what she wanted because she believed in herself, kept on trying and didn't give up. Ask them to think of something that they want to do or something they want to be better at. They might want to try harder at their work or be a kinder friend, or they might want to achieve something that may take a long time. Say that however big or small their goal is, they need to remember four things. Show them the words written on the flipchart:

- Know what it is you really want to do, or do better.
- Take the first step, however small it seems.
- Be patient if it takes time.
- Keep going and stick at it when it seems hard.

Ask the children to find a still, quiet place inside themselves. Ask them to think very hard about the first step they will take to achieve their goal. They may like to think about how their friends or their teacher can help them. Give them a minute or two to keep the thoughts quietly in their minds then play the music as they leave.

Follow-up plenary to be held at the end of the theme

Remind the children about the story and how Laxshmi became a fisherman. Tell them that Haroun did what he wanted to do as well. He learned how to smoke the fish and took them to market and met lots of people, even though everyone laughed at him at first, well everyone except Laxshmi.

Now children from each year group can present some of the work they have done in class.

End the plenary by asking everyone to think quietly about what they or someone else has achieved through the 'going for goals' work. Encourage them to think positively about their own or others' achievements and to feel proud of themselves or their friends. Ask the children to keep the thoughts in their heads as you play the music and they leave.