





Waterford Sustainable Living Initiative (SLí) is an independent development education nongovernmental organisation and registered charity.

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About

This project brought together four post-primary schools from the South East of Ireland to explore the traditions around storytelling and folktales and what we can learn about them in contemporary times.

The aims of this project were to:

- * Show the shared nature of our European heritage through our shared use of folktales throughout history
- * Demonstrate that the actions that we are being urged to take to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are consistent with the lessons we have been given throughout our history
- * Help students make connections to their own heritage in their home country and in Europe

The Sustainable Development Goals were passed by all UN member countries in 2015 to guide our actions through 2030. The EU has since their inception been a strong proponent and key driver in achieving the SDGs. The Global Goals are designed to serve as a framework for the international development work that takes place throughout the world ensuring that countries with more resources help those with less resources reach the Goals by 2030. The Goals are designed to end poverty and hunger, protect human rights and build an inclusive and sustainable future for everyone.

We work toward demystifying the SDGs by demonstrating that we all do things every day that help us achieve the SDGs from decreasing our plastic use to providing access to quality education to helping fight COVID. Progress on the SDGs is taking place at the government level, at community level and at individual level.

To check the progress on the Goals at an EU level, go to the Eurostat SDG site (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi>) and to look at Ireland's progress, go to Ireland's official monitoring site:<https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/>.

Students from Our Lady of Mercy Waterford, Newtown School Waterford, De La Salle College and CBS High School in Clonmel were asked to contribute a folktale to this booklet. Students either wrote their own folktale, brought one from their childhood or researched a folktale from their culture. We looked at the morale of these stories with an eye toward how we can use these lessons from our past to inform our present and our future and how these lessons are at times very similar to what we are being asked to do to support the SDGs.



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Barry the Bee

By Judith Sanchez, Issie Boylan, Millie Pim, Cathal Quigley, Ronan Van der Veen from Newtown School Waterford.

Students chose to focus on the importance of human connection and working together much like the work that is supported by Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals.



Deep in the dark, dreary forest, there was a lonely bumble bee, whose name was Barry. Bees aren't normally lonely, but Barry was. He longed to be a part of a hive of his own one day, but so far in life all he faced was solitude and isolation.

One day whilst Barry was foraging for some flowers, he stumbled across a bunch of bees bumbling about. At first, he watched from afar, mesmerised, until eventually he came to his senses and buzzed over to them.

"Which hive are you from then?" squeaked the biggest bee of the group.

"I...I am not from a hive. I live all by myself in that tree over there" said Barry, nervously. This was the first time he has ever spoken to another bee before. It felt odd, but nice.

"You live all by yourself?" the little one said, in quite a shocked tone of voice.

"Well... yes. I have always been alone. I mean, I would certainly like to join a hive one day, but so far, no luck with that." Barry laughed anxiously. Were the other bees going to think of him a freak?

"Why don't you come join our hive?"

Barry felt the world stop. His dream was finally coming true. He buzzed with happiness and told the bees he would of course join their hive.

Barry lived the rest of his short life, happily, in a hive full of other bees, where everything is shared, and everyone cares for one another. The importance of community and cooperation is something





Different Jack

Different Jack was written by Jessica Walsh from Our Lady of Mercy in Waterford.

Jessica chose to focus on the ways that we include and exclude each other. Inclusion is an important theme throughout many of the Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, there is something about inclusion in every single one of the Goals. About 1 billion people around the world experience some form of disability. We see higher poverty rates, lower educational attainment, along with lack of accessibility in many parts of the world. This links to Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities which aims to make all human settlements, regardless of size, safe, accessible and sustainable.



There once was a turtle, his name was Jack. He was the ugly duckling of the group and was always the odd one out. All because he was too slow. Jack would trail behind the other turtles and fall because of his extra short legs. He always thought that it was in his nature to be slow, but his “friends” thought different. His “friends” would make fun of him and would call him names. This made him feel small and vulnerable. Jack went to his mother and she told him that he is perfect. She said that “being different from the rest of the crowd is good, it means you stand out and it shows you have a mind of your own”.



Safe Housing

Affordable and safe housing for everyone is a key component to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. There is a housing component to 13 out of the 17 Goals with an explicit link to Goal 1 No Poverty; Goal 3 Good Health and Well Being; Goal 5 Gender Inequality; Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation and Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities. (Source: Habitat for Humanity Australia).





The One with the Broken Wing

This folktale was written by Emma Power from Our Lady of Mercy Waterford. Disability is a key component of the SDGs and you can see issues of access present in Goals 4, 8, 10, 11 and 17. Goal 4: Quality Education for All calls for inclusive and accessible learning environments for students around the world.

Far away, deep in the forest lies the kingdom of Cryison. All types of creatures lived there big and small. Some walked, some flew and everybody was always equal. But not as equal as it seems.

Dain was a fairy with big hazel eyes and beautiful wings in the shade of green. He was friendly and kind. He mostly got along with elves but he was a fairy, a very special fairy. Dain was born with a broken wing which meant he couldn't fly like many of the other fairies he knew. It never bothered him really, but he just couldn't change that.

One bright day, the sun peeping through the luscious green trees, Dain came across some of his fellow fairies laughing with each other. He smiled, thinking about what it was. It seemed to be a party. Walking closer, Dain called up to them. He saw one of them sigh and fly down followed by the rest.

"What do you want, Dain?" A girl with light brown hair and pinkish eyes spoke. "Aubri! Can I join you guys?" Dain asked sweetly. Aubri chuckled a little. "Have you forgotten Dain? Only fairies who can fly can be a part of our party. You're not normal anyway" She crossed her arms annoyed. Dain, feeling upset nodded in understanding to why he wasn't wanted. "Sorry for bothering you.." He apologised and turned to leave.

Dain didn't imagine that he would be so unwanted to other fairies because he couldn't fly. Maybe he was just born the wrong thing that gave him an imperfection. He sat himself down by a trunk of a tree sighing lightly as he continued to degrade his imperfection.

"Dain!" A voice called. Dain brought his gaze to the voice and saw another fairy by the name of Ensley. She had blond hair and a blue dress. She was panting as she approached him. "Are you alright?" She asked. Dain hummed, not really caring. "You're not okay, Aubri discarded you from the fun just because you have a broken wing!" She exclaimed. "I told her off, you know" She added. Dain looked at her. "Aubri's right though, I can't fly"

"There's beauty in imperfections, I think. Come on"

Ensley brought Dain back to the other fairies who stood there with sorrowful looks for not standing up earlier. Aubri had a pout on her face. "Sorry...What I said was rude..I'm sorry" She apologised. Dain gave her a smile. "It's alright" He replied. Ensley then took his hand followed by some of the others and they pushed themselves to fly, holding onto Dain's hands to help him up.

Ensley smiled at him and Dain returned it. The others were laughing with each other just like before when Dain first saw them. Ensley giggled a little as Dain looked below him. She quietly came closer to him and said: "Just because you may have an imperfection doesn't make you any less than normal"



Picture by Kaisal on Unsplash



It Takes A Village

Holly Grant of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School wrote this folktale in order to share the morale of the story to not be so caught up in yourself as to leave others behind.

It was the start of hibernation and the family of 6 bears had just finished collecting all of their food for the winter. Billy was the oldest bear out of his 3 brothers and sisters so his parents let him go to find his own food in the weeks before hibernation. The day of hibernation, Billy thought he might need some extra food for the winter. His sister Beth wanted to go too because she was going to miss walking around. Billy said she could go and they spent the day finding more food they could share with their family. As they reached their cave Beth was cold so she ran back to the cave and pushed the boulder over the entrance to keep the heat inside. When Billy got home he called for his family to let him in but they had already gone to sleep. Billy waited outside all night in the cold hoping his family would let him in but morning came and Billy was freezing. Billy left and spent the next freezing week building a cave to stay in until Spring, when he could see his family again. During this week, Beth thought about how it was her fault that Billy was outside but she never told her family that it was her fault. She said Billy told her to go home without him and so the rest of the bears were worried about Billy. Beth put herself in Billy's shoes and started to worry about him more so she told her parents. The whole family of bears left their warm cave and searched for days to find Billy. When they found him in his new cave they were all happy to see him and bring him home safely. The family of bears spent the rest of their winter nice and warm in their cave together promising Billy that they would never leave him behind again.



Obaledo

This traditional folktale was submitted by Goodness Mbala from Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School. The folktale is also presented in its original Igbo from Nigeria which is one of 5 major languages spoken in Nigeria.

There was a time in an Igbo village when demons and monsters torment the younger ones. The villagers tried to kill the monsters but all their efforts were in vain. In this same village, a beautiful girl named Obaledo lived with her parents. She was so beautiful that princes from faraway lands wanted to marry her.

One day, Obaledo's parents traveled to the next village and left her yams and snails to eat. Her parents warned her not to leave the house because of monsters that roam the village especially at night. They also warned her to cook the yam before roasting the snail because the snail would quench the fire.

When Obaledo's parents were away, she became hungry one night. She made a fire with the last matchstick and roasted the snail first because of her lust for meat. The snail quenched the fire and she couldn't roast the yam. Still hungry, she disobeyed her parents and went out of the house to collect matchsticks from a neighbor. On her way she met a very ugly monster that steals beauty from young girls. She tried to run but she couldn't move her legs. The monster stole her beauty and left her with its ugliness.

Since that day, the beautiful Obaledo who was once the talk of the village now became the ugly girl no one wanted to marry.

MORAL- This Igbo folktale teaches children the importance of obedience.

Obaledo

Onwere oge n'ime obodo Igbo mgbe mmuo ojoo na anu na-emegbu umuntakiri. Ndi obodo ahụ nwara igbu anụ ndị ahụ mana mbọ ha niile furu efu. N'otu obodo a, otu ọmarịcha nwa agboghọ aha ya bụ Obaledo na nne na nna ya bi. Ọ mara mma nke ukwu nke na ndị isi ala dị anya chọrọ ịlụ ya.

Otu ụbọchị, nne na nna Obaledo gawara obodo na-eso ya wee hapụ ji na eju ya ka ọ rie. Nne na nna ya doro ya aka ná ntị ka ọ ghara ịpụ n'ụlọ n'ihị nnukwu anụ na-akpagharị n'ime obodo karịsịa n'abalị. Ha dọkwara ya aka na ntị ka o sie yam tupu ya esichaa eju n'ihị na eju na-emenyụ ọkụ.

Mgbe nne na nna Obaledo na-anọghị ya, agụụ guurụ ya otu abalị. O were osisi asha-nda-ikpe-azu were ọkụ were buru uzọ were rie eju ahu n'ihị agụ anu-ya. Ejula menyụọ ọkụ, ọ nweghị ike ịracha ji. N'ịbụ onye agụụ ka na-agụ, ọ nupụrụ ndị mụrụ ya isi wee pụọ n'ụlọ na-anakọta osisi n'aka onye agbata obi ya. Ka ọ na-aga ọ zutere otu anụ ọhịa jọgburu onwe ya nke na-ezu ohi ịma mma n'aka ụmụ agboghọ. Ọ gbaliri igba ọsọ mana ọ nweghị ike imeghari ụkwụ ya. Nnukwu anụ ahụ zuru ịma mma ya wee hapụ ya n'idi njo ya.

Kemgbe ụbọchị ahụ, Obaledo mara mma nke bụbu okwu obodo ugbu a ghorọ nwa agboghọ jọgburu onwe ya na-enweghị onye chọrọ ịlụ.

MORAL- Akụkọ Igbo a na-akuziri ụmụaka mkpa ọ dị nrube isi.



The Salmon of Knowledge



This traditional folktale was submitted by Katie Kavanagh & Faria Hossain, of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School. Katie and Faria remember being taught this folktale in primary school in Ireland. The lesson learned from the Salmon of Knowledge is about the importance of passing down knowledge from one generation to generation.

Long ago Fionn mac Cumhaill, who was a young boy at the time, was sent to live with a wise man called Finnegas. Finnegas lived on the banks of the River Boyne.

Finnegas was well known for his vast knowledge about different things like stars, birds and animals. He knew more than anyone else in Ireland. Fionn loved to listen to Finnegas's stories and facts, he knew about different things and in return Fionn would help cook, clean and fish. Even though Finnegas had vast knowledge, he did not know everything and wasn't able to answer all of Fionn's questions which made Fionn incredibly curious. One day Fionn asked Finnegas: 'Is there a way to know everything?'. It was a question Finnegas had asked too and was the reason he had been living on the banks of the River Boyne. It was said by the Druids that living in a still, dark pool in the shade of the overhanging hazel trees was the Salmon of Knowledge. It was as a result of eating the nuts of these magical hazel trees that the Salmon had acquired all the knowledge of the world. And so it was that, according to prophecy, the one who would eat the Salmon would gain the knowledge for themselves. Finnegas had been trying to catch it for several years now. Finally Finnegas had caught the Salmon of Knowledge. 'I've caught it! I've caught it!', he cried happily.



He immediately reeled it in and ran up to Fionn with the Salmon in his arms.

'You must cook it straight away!' Finnegas ordered Fionn, dancing and skipping with excitement.

As Fionn began to set up the fire and spit in order to cook the Salmon, Finnegas warned him, 'Cook it, but whatever you do, do not eat a single bit of it!'

Fionn nodded and went about cooking the Salmon while Finnegas went to fetch some extra firewood. When Finnegas returned he saw the Salmon laid out and ready to eat. He looked at Fionn and thought he saw something different about him, as though the light of wisdom now shone in his eyes.

'Have you eaten any of the Salmon?' he asked Fionn anxiously.

'I have not!' Fionn replied.

'Have you tasted its skin?' he continued to question

I have not!' Fionn replied, 'but when I was turning it, I burned my fingers, so I put my thumb into my mouth to ease the pain.'

Finnegas' heart broke and he said ' You have tasted the Salmon of Knowledge; the prophecy is fulfilled. You are the one who has gained all the knowledge of the world.' He then told Fionn to eat all of the salmon.

Once Fionn had eaten it all he didn't feel any different. Finnegas then suggested that Fionn should put his thumb into his mouth like he did before and so he did and all the knowledge of the world rushed into his brain. 'You must go now! There is nothing more I can teach you,' Finnegas tells him.

When Fionn grew up, he did indeed become a wise poet, warrior and leader. He became a great leader of the Fianna, the greatest band of warriors Ireland has ever known.



Petticoat Loose



This traditional Irish folktale was submitted by Irene Lonergan of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School. This tale has been used to warn children not to disobey their parents or the Shade Petticoat Loose will come for them. In other tellings of the tale, Petticoat is a misunderstood woman of strength who is judged by misplaced societal standards. You decide...does Petticoat still haunt the hills of Colligan (shown above).

Petticoat Loose was a six foot tall farm girl born in the 1800's whose real name was either Mary or Brigid, depending on the storyteller. She did the man's work on the farm, drank like a man, and would also wrestle and fight the local men when they mocked her. They say she killed a bull with a single blow of her first. They also say she killed a farmhand with his own spade and threatened to kill everyone if they told on her. Her nickname stuck to her after an incident in the Quills pub in Dungarvan where she used to be a regular. Her petticoat got undone while she spun around in a drunken dance. Petticoat Loose was a great dancer, no man could match her.

It is how she met her future husband – on the dance floor. The marriage lasted a year.



There were rumors that Petticoat Loose had a lover, a local hedge-schoolmaster. One night when she and her servants were milking the cattle, a cry of agony came from the fields. A servant girl was about to run and find out what was the matter, but a milking stool flew through the air and hit her on the back of her head. Petticoat Loose then told her to stay put and mind her own business.

Poor husband was never seen again after that night.

Another year went by. One night Petticoat Loose was in the pub, drinking with the local workmen. She was challenged by them to prove her drinking skills and offered half a gallon of beer. She drank it down, and then suddenly collapsed. She died without a priest, and no priest was called for her burial.

Seven years later Petticoat Loose ghost returned to haunt belated travelers, and was also seen around the pubs and dance halls. She became the terror of one particular road, and was responsible for at least one death. For some reason, she would never harm anyone by the name of John.

She even challenged a local man to a dancing contest. I don't know what would happen to him if he wasn't clever enough to make a ring with Holy Water round himself and stay within it.

All this horror lasted another 80 years. The local people had had enough, and called for a priest.

The priest doused the ghost with Holy Water and asked her why she kept coming back, to which she replied that she was damned, and admitted that she had killed a number of people. The priest banished her to Bay Lough, but she told him that she would do evil wherever she was. 'We will see', the priest replied. 'I will place your head downwards.'

At these words, Petticoat Loose vanished and was never seen afterwards, but the priest soon died. Some say he didn't die though. He just disappeared because he wasn't from this world.

Bottomless Bay Lough was a good choice. St Patrick once gathered up the monsters in Ireland and put them in Bay Lough. He told them to stay there and wait, and that he would be back tomorrow. So, they are still there, deep in the dark waters, waiting. Some say that Petticoat Loose ghost took a shape of a monster with the body of a horse and the head of a woman. Others say she still looks like her old self, a large woman with red hair that sometimes appears out of the water and asks the same question all over again: 'When will the day of judgment come?'

I am not the only one who has a feeling that Petticoat Loose isn't gone for good yet.

