

## TEACHER'S NOTES

## SECTARIANISM

## LAUGHTER LAB

### ACROSS THE BORDER

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Pupils will improve their understanding of Protestant stereotypical perceptions of the Republic of Ireland
- Pupils will explore through humour some examples of Protestant stereotypes of the Republic of Ireland
- Pupils will think about the consequences of using such stereotypes
- Pupils will begin to realise that people in Northern Ireland can have a stereotypical view of the state across the border

#### SUGGESTED STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES TO REINFORCE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Debate
- Workshops
- Role play
- Pupil journal
- Collages

#### RESOURCES:

Video clip - 'Across the border' (1 min 42 secs)  
Located in Laughter lab, Sectarianism section

Question sheet (Appendix 1)

Task sheet (Appendix 2)

**SUGGESTED TIMING:** 1 hour (depending on size, receptivity and ability of class)

#### LESSON SEQUENCE:

##### Preparation

ONLY DO IF YOU HAVE NOT COMPLETED THE LESSON BASED ON THE 2 VIDEO CLIPS 'CATHOLIC STEREOTYPES' AND 'INDOCTRINATING BABY'.

- Exercise

Use this exercise to explore stereotypes. Read out one word at a time from the list below. The words describe a group of people in society. The students are asked to write down their first, honest response/reaction to each word.

GOTHS  
CATHOLICS  
HOMELESS  
PROTESTANTS  
FOOTBALL FANS  
CLERGY  
BIKERS  
TEACHERS  
TRAVELLERS  
POP STARS  
PARENTS  
TEENAGERS

After the list is read out ask the class to 'grade' their responses.

Grade N for negative response

Grade X for neutral response

Grade P for positive response

Follow-up discussion could take 2 forms.

(a) Labelling

POSITIVE and NEGATIVE labels are put at either end of the classroom. The centre of the classroom can be Grade X. Read out names of the groups (from list above) one by one and pupils should move to the relevant end of the classroom

OR

(b) Ask pupils questions

What negative responses did you have?

What positive responses did you have?

Teacher-led discussion should clearly set out that the negative or positive responses are STEREOTYPES of that particular group e.g. not all football fans cause trouble or not all pop stars are musical... etc...

AND / OR

- Brainstorm

Explore personal views/experiences of the Republic of Ireland by posing the following questions:

- What do you understand 'down south' to mean?
- Where have you visited and did you enjoy your stay?
- Did anything surprise you or was everything as you expected?

(These questions are available in a table format which can be handed out to pupils to complete. See Appendix 1.)

Explore what comedy is by posing the following questions:

- Why is something funny?
- Is the humour at anybody's expense?
- Does it reinforce any stereotypes?  
(definition of stereotype in lesson glossary)

(These questions are available in a table format which can be handed out to pupils to complete. See Appendix 1.)

- Video clip

Write the following questions up on whiteboard:

- What did Uncle Andy mean when he described the Republic of Ireland as the 'Bermuda Triangle' for Protestants?
- What percentage change does he mention regarding population?
- What reasons did Dympna give for the 'disappearance' of Protestants?
- Did Uncle Andy take her explanation seriously?
- Do you think Uncle Andy fairly represents the Protestant view of this issue?

Explain to pupils that we are going to watch a short video clip from a comedy programme which looks at how some Protestants perceive the Republic of Ireland

Pupils watch video clip

Consideration of questions asked  
(including help with lesson glossary if required)

## **Task**

- Pupils get into small groups (four or five per group) and each group should be given a task sheet (Appendix 2)
- Groups prepare their reports
- Each group reads out their findings regarding the mystery

## **Conclusion**

The class opens to a whole group discussion considering the following questions:

- Have you heard any of the explanations before that are given in the video?
- When you first heard the explanations did you perceive them to be opinions or facts?
- What do you think now?

## **Homework**

Pupils write into pupil journal their thoughts on the above questions and the lesson in general.

They should also think about how people in Northern Ireland sometimes choose to believe explanations that suit their own point of view rather than seeking out the truth.

These people gather together 'facts' to back up their existing opinions, rather than listening to explanations which go against their beliefs.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**

Research project: pupils produce a piece of work which would include statistics and reasons for the decrease in the number of Protestants in the Republic of Ireland

News report: pupils split into two large groups and using a camcorder produce a video news bulletin from a humorous angle  
(Each group should report on the 'missing Protestants' of the Republic of Ireland)

**LESSON GLOSSARY:**

Emigration: (opposite of immigration) When people voluntarily move out of one country to start a new life in another country.

Free Presbyterian: This Protestant church was started by Rev Ian Paisley in 1951 and is fundamentalist and evangelical. Members believe that they must live their lives according to what is written in the bible and that preaching the gospel to others is important.

Intermarriage: Marriage between people of different races or religions.

State: Another word used to describe a country or its government.

Stereotype: Believing that people of a certain group, race or religion all have the same characteristics when they don't. Fixed, inaccurate ideas about a group which leads to its members being treated in a certain way.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**Question Sheet****Republic of Ireland**

What do you understand 'down south' to mean?	Where have you visited and did you enjoy your stay?	Did anything surprise you or was everything as you expected?

**Comedy**

Why is something so funny?	Is the humour at anybody's expense?	Does it reinforce any stereotypes?

**APPENDIX 2****TASK SHEET**

You are James Bond (007) and a small team of fellow spies.

Your mission is to uncover the secrets that lie behind the mystery of the 'missing Protestants' in the Republic of Ireland. You must write a report to be presented to 'M' at headquarters (ie the rest of the class).

The Evidence you have been given is that:

- Protestants were about 10% of the population of the Republic of Ireland in 1921
- Protestants are now about 2% of the population of the Republic of Ireland

Your team of spies must list the possible reasons why this percentage has changed so dramatically.

You should consider the following information:

**From the Video Clip**

- Catholic population has increased relative to the Protestant one
- Intermarriage between Catholics and Protestants
- Emigration of Protestants to other countries (USA etc)
- Under the floorboards!
- Fugitives hiding out in attics!
- Alien abduction!

**Other Reasons**

- Ethnic cleansing
- Hostile state
- Close relationship between RC church and the state
- They just disappeared with no explanation!
- Can your team think of any other reasons?

You will have to present your report to 'M' at headquarters.