

Positive Role Models

SPHE STRANDS:

**Myself – Growing and changing
– Making decisions**

**Myself and Others – Myself and
my family – Myself and
other people**

**Myself and the Wider World –
Developing citizenship**

Uncle Tom

Jane lived with her mam and little brother in a big housing estate. She loved football, but the problem was that her garden was really small. Every time she tried to kick a ball with someone it went over the wall, and once she broke their kitchen window. Her mam was so cross that she banned Jane from playing football in the garden from that moment on.

Jane's uncle Tom called round to their house once a week on his way home from work. He usually brought some lovely cakes with him and he helped Jane with her maths when she couldn't work out the ones with long multiplication. Tom was a good footballer – he used to play with the county minors

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a few years ago. One Friday Jane told him about breaking the window and that she wasn't allowed to play in the garden any more.

'I know what to do,' he said, I train the under-12s in my club on a Friday night. We'll ask your mam if you can come with me on Friday evenings and you might get on the team.' Jane jumped up and down with excitement when her mam said 'yes' and she couldn't wait to go to the club with Tom.

Now Jane plays in Saint Enda's every Friday. She loves it there and she's really proud of her uncle Tom. Everyone seems to look up to him. All the under-12s say how cool he is and they do everything he says. They say he's the best coach they ever had. Jane keeps whispering to the other kids, 'He's my uncle,' and she can see that they're really impressed.

One night she asked Uncle Tom if he got paid much for training the team. He laughed and said 'Not a cent, but I love it and I wouldn't give it up for the world.' Jane was flabbergasted. 'You don't get paid?' she said, amazed that he would do it for nothing. 'No, but it's better than payment to know that I'm bringing happiness to all those girls and boys and giving something back to my club,' he said.

'Wow!' said Jane. Now Uncle Tom was even more of a hero in her eyes. 'I want to be like him when I grow up,' she said to her mam, 'He's so cool!'

When you have read the story chat to the children about it using questions such as:

Why was Jane not allowed to play football in her garden?

Do you think her mam was being fair?

How often did Uncle Tom call around?

Why was Jane so proud of Uncle Tom?

Do you know anyone like Uncle Tom?

Is there anyone in your family or community that you think is a good role-model? Tell the class about them.

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Role Models

Invite the children to draw a picture of a role model they know. This person doesn't have to be famous or have done anything huge. They should just be someone who the children feel is kind and generous with their time or someone who does good or brings happiness into the lives of other. Display the pictures on the wall.

Could I Be a Role Model?

Invite the children to think of the characteristics of a role-model. They can reflect on those they have drawn or on someone already discussed in class. List the characteristics, e.g. kind, generous, friendly, unselfish, forgiving, encouraging, enthusiastic, etc.

Chat with the children about how they might be role models in the school – being a good example to younger pupils, being kind and gentle in the yard, walking in the corridors, picking up rubbish if they see any, speaking politely to everyone, etc. Talk about how they can be role models in their homes or communities – looking out for elderly people, keeping their garden/footpath clean outside their house, being respectful, offering help when needed, going to bed at the agreed time, doing their homework, etc.

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Reflection:

Invite the children to close their eyes and read the following reflection:

Think of your family and those who live with you. Think of each member slowly and try to remember a time when they were good to you. Then think of a time you did something nice for them. How did that make you feel?

Now think of your neighbourhood. Is there anyone who does a lot of good for others? Think of them now. Is there anyone who needs help that you or your family might be able to reach out to? Could you be a little more friendly or helpful in your community?

Now think of someone famous you look up to. Are they kind? Are they generous? Can you think of something really good that they do for others?

We ask God to help us to appreciate those who are unselfish and who give their time and skills freely to others. Help us to do our best to be unselfish too. Think of one good thing you plan to do for someone today and ask God's help as you do it. Amen.