

Awakening

A.T. Ariyaratne had the idea of bringing upper-caste high school students to help rebuild remote poverty-stricken villages in Sri Lanka. Ari called his crusade Sarvodaya, a word Gandhi used to mean "the awakening of all." His students learned practical skills while developing compassion -- like the Sarvodaya saying, "We build the road and the road builds us." It's become the world's largest volunteer movement where people are working together to improve over 11,000 villages. In this story, we learn how one boy's life changes in the Sarvodaya, and how after moving to the United States, he returns to his home village to share a message with the children. "Sarvodaya awakens young people, who then awaken their families, their communities, then the world," Patrick said, "but the awakening must start first with each one of us."

Reflection Questions

1. Why did the village people have hope -- and know that things would get done?
2. Would you help feed one person by sharing your meal with another?
3. Would you spend your summer at a work camp helping people with "gifts of labor"?
4. What does Patrick mean when he says, "awakening must start first with each one of us."

Qualities and Values

•Sharing •Camaraderie •Hope •Teamwork •Brotherly love •Spirituality

Lessons You Can Learn

1. By building roads together, they built a family, a community and a spirit in their village.
2. Even though Patrick was a Christian, he became brothers with the Buddhists.
3. Volunteer projects can transform entire villages -- and even countries.

Actions

Language Arts

- Study both the Gandhian and Buddhist principles to organize community development.
- Add to spelling list: caste, crusade, compassion, Sarvodaya, shramadanas, Mali and ayya.
- Teach students a simple Buddhist chant or a loving kindness meditation.

Social Studies

- Find Sri Lanka on a map and study its history. Have students request information from the department of tourism. Write a report on the resources and challenges of Sri Lanka.
- Identify other examples of "inter-class" cooperation in the U.S. and the third world.
- Research and write a report on technologically appropriate energies like windmills and methane generators used in third world countries and in America.
- Visit a working windmill and study how they are designed and maintained.

Community Service

- Create a local work camp project that addresses specific needs in your community.
- Develop a directory of service groups/opportunities to volunteer in your community.
- Invite students who travel with their families to visit the Sarvodaya: Arisar@sri.lanka.net
- Develop a directory of alternative energy sources like solar power, windmills etc and ask your local newspaper to print it and distribute it to families in your community.
- Research and find a village somewhere in the world that could use support. Identify their needs as well as the resources in your community to support them. Compose a plan and invite people in your community to join in helping this village.

Curriculum - Stone Soup for the World: Life Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes