

Key Stage 2 Assembly

Making a Difference

Year group: Key Stage Two

Assembly plan

Aims

To introduce the children to the story of Wilma Rudolph.
To provide them with a role model for treating others with respect and making a difference.

Introduction

Explain that the children are going to hear a true story about a remarkable lady in today's assembly.

Main presentation

Tell the children the story of Wilma Rudolph, born in America in 1940, a time when most parts of America were racially segregated. Wilma was the twentieth of twenty-two children.
Wilma was not very old when her left leg became weak and deformed - it was discovered that she had polio - in those days an incurable disease which could cause paralysis.
Doctors told Wilma's mother that Wilma would never walk. Wilma's mother did not give up hope and twice a week she took Wilma to the nearest hospital that would treat black people - 50 miles away.
Wilma was fitted with a leg brace to enable her to walk, and her brothers and sisters helped by carrying out exercises with her at home.
By the age of 12 Wilma could walk normally and she decided to become an athlete. She was a star basketball player at High School and she trained as a track runner.
In 1956 she was chosen for the US Olympic team and competed in the Melbourne Games where she won a bronze medal as part of the relay team.
She competed again in 1960 in the Rome Olympics where she won three gold medals - in the 100m, 200m and the 4 x 100m relay.
It was decided to hold a parade in her honour when she returned to America. Wilma insisted that the parade should be open to both black and white people, and it was the first non-segregated event in the town of Clarksville, Tennessee.
Wilma became a teacher and a track coach; she set up the Wilma Rudolph Foundation to help under-privileged children.

Wilma died of brain cancer in 1994. In the 54 years that she had been alive, she never gave up, and she was a role model for others to follow. She realised that what she was doing was making a difference.

Reflection

Ask the children to think about the things that Wilma worked so hard to achieve and the remarkable journey her life took from taking her first shaky steps to achieving 3 gold medals in the Olympics. Encourage them to think about ways in which they can make a difference, including showing more care for the environment and their own health by trying to get out of their cars and walking more.

Notes

June 23rd is Wilma Rudolph Day and also International Olympic Day. The children could use the Internet to find out more information about Wilma Rudolph.