



Why is hand- washing important?

Introduction

Each day, 2000 children die as a result of diseases caused by unclean water and poor sanitation in the developing world. The simple act of washing hands with soap can help prevent many of these deaths. This set of lesson plans reminds and introduces pupils of the importance of hand-washing in preventing the spread of illness and disease.

Curriculum links

The curriculum links listed below are not exhaustive but offer a guide as to where this set of lesson plans could fit into specific subject areas.

Key Stage 1: PSHE: to understand why maintaining personal hygiene is important.

Key Stage 2: PSHE: to understand that bacteria and viruses can affect health and following simple, safe routines can reduce their spread.

Aims

- To explore ways in which we use our hands and understand how they pick up and pass on germs.
- To consider ways in which messages about hand-washing can be promoted to others by looking at how this is done in other parts of the world.

Key words

Hand-washing

Illness

Germs

Healthy

Hygiene

Resources

Resource 1: Yacouba's story

Resource 2: Tenincoura's story

Resource 3: Hand-washing photographs

Notes to accompany hand-washing photographs

Note for teachers

This set of lesson plans asks pupils to consider why hand-washing is important. This can be adapted into activities for individuals if group work is not suitable for the class. Although the lessons are presented as one continuous plan they are intended to form a set of lessons, allowing the teacher to choose whether to cover all aspects of the plan or just a few.

Throughout the plans there are suggested questions to ask pupils. These can be presented as questions to discuss or can be written. They should be adapted to suit learning groups as seen as appropriate by the teacher.

Lesson plan

Key question	Activity	Resources
<p>What do we do with our hands?</p>	<p>Introduction Ask the pupils to draw around their hands. They should draw their nails and any lines and creases that they can see on the back of their hands. The pupils should cut their outlines out. These will be used later in the lesson.</p>	<p>Paper / card Pencils</p>
	<p>Split the class into three groups and provide each group with a large piece of paper and a marker pen. Each group should do the following:</p> <p>Group 1: should think of, discuss, agree on and write up five places or activities in which they are likely to get their hands dirty. They should present their answers on a spider diagram. Examples could be painting, playing outdoors, in the toilet.</p> <p>Group 2: should think of, discuss, agree on and write up five actions or activities that they need their hands for. They should present their answers on a spider diagram. Examples could include tying shoelaces, playing on the computer, writing, clapping, eating.</p> <p>Group 3: should think of, discuss, agree on and write up five good things they do with their hands. They should present their answers on a spider diagram. Examples could include giving someone a hug, holding a friend's hand, helping someone who is hurt.</p> <p>Allow a few minutes per group for feedback. Other members of the class can make suggestions of things to add to the lists. These should be added on to each group's spider diagram.</p>	<p>Large paper Marker pens</p>
	<p>In the same groups they should now:</p> <p>Group 1: think of, discuss, agree on and write up five reasons to wash hands. They should present their answers on a spider diagram. Examples could include not making things we touch dirty, not putting germs in our mouths.</p>	

	<p>Group 2: think of, discuss, agree on and write up five actions or activities they can do without hands. They should present their answers on a spider diagram. Examples could include, sleeping, walking, watching TV.</p> <p>Group 3: think of, discuss, agree on and write up five bad things that they can do with their hands. They should present their answers on a spider diagram. Examples could include punching, hitting, smacking, passing on germs.</p> <p>Each group should feedback their ideas and discuss them with the rest of the class. New suggestions should be added on to the diagrams.</p> <p>Ensure that the problem of germs is addressed.</p>	
<p>Where might germs hide on our hands?</p>	<p>Ask the pupils to look closely at their hands. Think about where germs might be hiding? If they are uncertain, ask children to imagine they have put their hands into some soil. Where does the soil stick to on their hands – under nails, in the creases (this could be demonstrated using wet sand or soil).</p> <p>On their hand cut-outs, they should draw where germs could be hiding. Ask them to come up with their own ideas about how they should draw germs (for example they may draw tiny bugs or shade the areas).</p> <p>Ask the pupils to look at their hand cut-outs with all the germs. What do they think they should do to ensure that they get rid of germs when they wash their hands? Would just using water be enough? They need to think about washing their hands thoroughly – under the nails, the front and back of hands and using soap.</p>	<p>Optional – wet sand / soil</p> <p>Hand cut-outs from introductory activity</p>
	<p>Ask the pupils why it's important to get rid of germs from our hands. What do germs cause? Explain that once the germs get into our bodies they can cause illness and unpleasant tummy bugs.</p> <p>Ask the pupils to look at their lists of things that they can do with their hands – which of these might cause germs to spread to others or get into our bodies? Reinforce that this is why it is very important that we wash our hands straight after we do something that might make them dirty (refer to group 1's list) as even if we then do something nice (refer to group 3's list), it might become something bad such as pass on an illness (you may refer to group 3's list if appropriate).</p> <p>As we need our hands for lots of activities that we take part in it's very important that we keep them clean to ensure that we don't</p>	

	spread germs around and make each other unwell.	
	<p>In pairs, ask the pupils to join their hand cut-outs together and stick them on to a piece of coloured paper to create a poster to inform others about hand-washing. They should think of a catchy slogan or come up with a short rhyme or poem to spread their very important hygiene message. They will also need a good title for their poster. As a class, they could think of words to do with cleanliness, germs and washing. Key messages they may want to include are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-washing is important at all times – at school, at home and when you are out. • Hand-washing helps you stay healthy. • Hand-washing gets rid of the germs that make you ill. 	<p>Coloured paper and pens / pencils.</p> <p>Hand cut outs</p>
Where should we share our important hand-washing message?	<p>Ask the class where they think they could display their posters. Think about the places where hands get dirty: the toilets, the dinner hall, the playground, garden etc. Ask them to list where the posters could be displayed and have the posters laminated and displayed in their chosen spots.</p>	
	<p>Explain that in some poorer countries, there is no clean, safe water or toilets available for everybody to use. Many children get very ill or even die from diseases and illnesses which are caused by dirty water and not washing hands. For this reason it is really important that people learn and understand why they need to wash their hands. Read the two personal stories with the class to introduce them to some of the problems faced by children in some developing countries.</p>	<p>Resource 1: Yacouba's story</p> <p>Resource 2: Tenincoura's story</p>
How are hand-washing messages spread to others all over the world?	<p>Show the pupils the hand-washing photos (these can be viewed as a slideshow) and follow the guidance below. Give each child a blank world map (optional). Introduce the idea of groups/organisations such as WaterAid working in countries to help spread hygiene messages and explain that the images show places where WaterAid has worked.</p> <p>Photo 1: Explain that these children are from Madagascar. Find and mark or shade Madagascar on a map. You could also</p>	<p>Blank world maps (optional)</p> <p>Resource 3 photographs</p>

use a large world map or a globe. Dependent on the age and ability of your group, ask the pupils to label and shade Madagascar on their own world maps. You should also find the UK and mark or shade it in, to give pupils a sense of place.

Explain that the children in the photo are singing a song about hand-washing. They learn the songs and then perform them to other children and their friends and families. Ask the pupils if they think songs are a good way of telling others about the importance of hand-washing? Why are songs good at helping us to remember things? Encourage the pupils to think about the way that songs repeat words – think of some examples.

Optional / extension work: brainstorm words and phrases to do with washing, keeping clean and germs. As a class put together a poem or simple song using the words and using repetition to make sure the message about hand-washing is made clear and easy to remember. Use repetition and rhyming words to help make the song or poem memorable. The song or poem could be performed in an assembly or recorded and podcast via the school website.

Photo 2: Explain that these children live in Nigeria. Find and mark or shade Nigeria on a map. The children are showing each other how to wash their hands properly. Ask the children if they think it's a good idea for children to teach each other how to do things? Why? Why not? Do they think this could work in their own school? How could this work? The pupils should come up with some ideas of how children in their own school can encourage each other to wash their hands properly with soap and water. For example they might have demonstration sessions, hand-washing monitors in the toilets or decide that pupils could teach their own lessons about hand-washing to younger children.

Photo 3: This photograph shows a puppet show in Madagascar. Recap where Madagascar is on the world map. Ask them if they think a puppet show is a good way of getting the hand-washing message across? Ask the pupils if they think it's easier to remember something if it was fun and enjoyable to watch and do?

Optional / extension work: Pupils could think about what type of characters might work in a puppet show about washing hands. These could be talking hands, nasty germs. In small groups, pupils could design and make their own puppets and put on performances about washing hands for other children in school. The puppets could be hand puppets, cut-outs on sticks, papier maché, fabric or finger puppets.

Photo 4: Explain that this photograph shows a classroom in

	<p>Nigeria. Recap where Nigeria is. Their teacher is teaching them about the importance of washing their hands.</p> <p>Photo 5: This photo is from Uganda. Find and mark or shade Uganda on a map. Explain that picture cards are being used to show people about washing their hands and the importance of good hygiene. Ask pupils why picture cards might be a good idea? Why couldn't they just write out the instructions instead? When might picture cards be a good idea? Ideas might include when working with people who speak a different language, when working with young children who can't read and when you want to get the message across quickly and easily.</p> <p>Optional / extension work: Pupils could create a set of picture cards showing when to wash hands and how to do it. Recap when hands should be washed and ask the pupils to come up with simple drawings and pictures for each scenario. Make the cards bright and colourful so that they stand out. They could use their cards to explain to young children about hand-washing – perhaps a nursery class or younger siblings and friends. They should feedback how effective their cards were.</p> <p>Photo 6: This photograph shows a boy in India. Find and mark or shade India on a map. The boy is standing in front of a mural outside his school's block of toilets. What is the mural reminding the children to do? Recap on why this mural is outside the toilets?</p>	
<p>Why is hand-washing important? What have we learnt?</p>	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Recap why hand-washing is important and when hands should be washed.</p> <p>Ask pupils to think about the images they have seen and any of the activities they have carried out. Which do they think is the best way of getting the message across and why? Do they think that just one way is the best or a combination of ways?</p> <p>Ask pupils to look at their maps – reiterate that hand-washing and good hygiene is something that everyone needs to know about and do wherever they are.</p> <p>Optional / extension work: Pupils could choose one of the countries on their maps to research. Country profiles could be created with maps, pictures and five facts about each place. Use the WaterAid website to find out about hygiene issues in their chosen country. The link below may be particularly useful. http://www.wateraid.org/uk/where-we-work#/africa</p>	

Resource 1: Yacouba's story



Yacouba Doumbia (on the left) lives in Simba East, Mali. He says:

“I wash my hands when I want to eat and also when I finish. I also wash my hands after I go to the toilet. Also, when I eat I make sure my food is covered from flies. I wash my hands to avoid dirtiness because if you don't wash your hands when you eat, you eat the dirtiness. I used to get sick, especially with stomach aches and headaches. Since my teacher taught me about hygiene and I started doing what he taught me for example washing my hands and body I can notice that I don't get sick anymore. I learned about hygiene through my teacher in the classroom. He taught me to wash my hands before and after eating and after using the toilet. I taught my family about hygiene particularly my mum and dad because my brothers and sisters also learn about good hygiene.”

Resource 2: Tenincoura's story



Tenincoura Coulibaly is 12 years old and lives in Simba East, Mali. She is pictured on the left.

“I wash my hands with soap to avoid diseases. When you wash just with water your hands are not clean and you can still get diarrhoea. I wash my hands with soap when I am about to eat and also when I use the toilet.

My teacher taught me how to wash my hands. My teacher taught me that when I left school I should greet my mum and dad and then wash my hands before and after I eat. He also taught me to wash my body before I come to school. Once at home I learned about hygiene education. I taught my parents but also the other children the importance of hygiene.

I have noticed a difference in health because when you wash your hands with soap you avoid disease. For example I used to get stomach aches but now I wash my hands I don't anymore.”

Resource 3: Hand-washing photographs

Photo 1: These children live in Madagascar. They are singing a song about hand-washing.



Resource 3: Hand-washing photographs

Photo 2: These children live in Nigeria. They are teaching each other how to wash their hands properly.



Resource 3: Hand-washing photographs

Photo 3: A puppet show in Madagascar about washing hands.



Resource 3: Hand-washing photographs

Photo 4: Children in a school in Nigeria being taught about washing their hands.



Resource 3: Hand-washing photographs

Photo 5: Picture cards being used in Uganda to explain about good hygiene.



Resource 3: Hand-washing photographs

Photo 6: A boy standing outside his school block of toilets in India. He is standing in front of a mural about hand-washing.



Notes to accompany hand-washing photographs

Below is further information and quotes to accompany the images which may be useful when discussing these with the class.

Photo 1: The children are singing:

*I wash my hands, my hands are clean
I wash my ears, my ears are clean
I wash my hair, my hair is clean
I wash my feet, my feet are clean
I wash my teeth, my teeth are clean*

Photo 2: These children attend a hygiene club at their school. They learn about washing their hands and making good hygiene part of their everyday lives. They sing a song when they wash their hands:

*Always wash your hands
Do not eat with dirty hands*

Photo 3: This puppet show was put on to educate the local community about hand-washing and sanitation. The whole community came to see the show and children especially enjoyed it. One of the children that watched the puppet show says :

"It was beautiful, wonderful and nice! This is the first time I have seen a giant puppet show. I have learnt lessons about washing my hands and am going to go home and tell my family about it. I'll tell them I saw puppets and tell my parents to wash their hands too. I'll come next time too."

Photo 4: This is a hygiene lesson in a primary school. The teacher teaches songs about hygiene and washing hands, as she believes it is very important for the children to learn these messages. She says:

"Children are taught...that diseases are passed from hand to mouth. Taught that sharing food if you don't wash your hands means two people will get sick."

Photo 5: This is a hygiene education workshop taking place in. Picture cards are being used to show the importance of hand-washing and good hygiene.

Photo 6: Children at this school learn about all aspects of hygiene education. They have a sanitation block with murals painted on the side to remind children about the importance of hand-washing.

Photo credits

Photo credits:

Personal story photographs: WaterAid/Layton Thompson

Photo 1: WaterAid/Marco Betti

Photo 2: WaterAid/Suzanne Porter

Photo 3: WaterAid/Marco Betti

Photo 4: WaterAid/Suzanne Porter

Photo 5: WaterAid/Caroline Irby

Photo 6: WaterAid/Marco Betti



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