



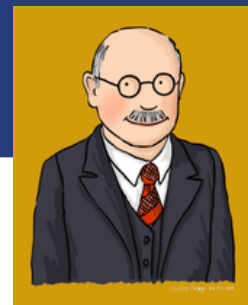
A discussion & activity day based on the life of John Laing

Aims

- To give pupils an opportunity to explore the life journey and values of Sir John Laing through discussions and various activities.
- To encourage pupils to reflect on and talk about their own life journey.

Suggestions

- Choose how many activities you want to do.
- You will need an adult to help at each activity station – you could ask a church for volunteers, a community group, retired teachers parents/grandparents.
- Make each activity table look attractive and interesting if possible.
- Staff, helpers and pupils could dress as builders for the day.
- Have construction opportunities available e.g. Lego, Knex, cardboard.
- In addition, ask a builder into the classroom to answer pupil questions.
- Add an art lesson – pupils produce a portrait of John Laing – use paint, pencil, collage or computer.
- If an activity day/half day is not possible these suggestions could be done as a class.



Activity 1



Introduction: John Laing always knew he wanted to be a builder like his father. John Laing said that if he sold 1000 homes, he hoped to gain 1000 friends, because they would love living in those houses. He made sure they were built well.

Activity: Build something out of Lego, Mega Blocks, cardboard etc.

Discussion: What job do you want to do when you grow up? Think and talk about why would you like to do that job?

Activity: Design a 'business' card for your chosen career.

You will need: Construction toys, pens, card.

Activity 2



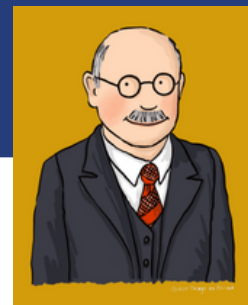
Introduction: John Laing lived from 1879 – 1978. He had a plan for his life. He followed his plan and had a long, interesting life full of hard work and fun. He died when he was 98 years old!

Activity: Look in the old wallet(s) to find a piece of paper with John's plan on it. (John Laing's Plan for his life: 1. Love God. 2. Enjoy life and help other people enjoy life. 3. Be generous with my money.)

Discussion: What do you enjoy about life? How could you help others enjoy life?

Activity: Write down your plan for your life and put it in an envelope with your name on. Stamp the date on the envelope. Take it home.

You will need: Old wallet(s) copies of John Laing's Programme for Life, pencils, paper, envelopes, date stamp.



Activity 3

Introduction: John Laing built several big community buildings, such as The British Library and Coventry Cathedral.



Activity: Look at some photographs of community buildings (where you live and beyond).

Discussion: Talk about community buildings and favourites. Why are they important? Should we take care of them? How do you think architects and builders feel when buildings are spoiled?

Activity: If you could build or design a community building, what would it be for? (It could be a library, a theatre, a football stadium, a church, a mosque, a hospital, a school, a railway station for something else.)

Pretend you are an architect and draw your design for a community building.

You will need: Photographs (or PowerPoint) of local community buildings and some from further away, large sheets of paper (A3?), pens/pencils.

Activity 4

Introduction: One businessman commented on John Laing: "Here comes Laing, happy as usual!" Many people say he was always happy and smiling.

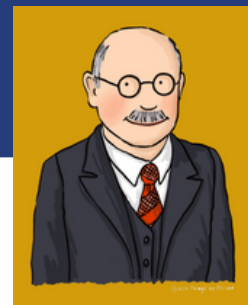


Activity: Read Spike Milligan's short poem 'A Smile's Worth'. He believed a smile was a small act of kindness and that everyone smiled more it could change the world!

Discussion: What do you think of Spike Milligan's idea? Who can you smile at today? Talk about what makes you happy?

Activity: Look at your face in a mirror. While smiling draw a portrait of your face with a smile on it! Give out smiley face stickers.

You will need: A copy of 'A Smile's Worth' by Spike Milligan, some smiley face stickers, paper, pencils, crayons, small mirrors.



Activity 5



Introduction: Everything lovely and beautiful thrilled John Laing. He was especially delighted by nature or creation. He loved the view from his home, watching the birds in the garden, and he always admired a beautiful oak tree.

Activity: Have some pictures of common garden birds. Which do you think may have been John Laing's favourites? Learn the names of a few common birds.

Discussion: Talk about what you enjoy or find beautiful in nature.

Activity: Decorate an oak leaf or a bird shape on both sides and hang it on the tree.

You will need: Pictures of common garden birds, photo of an oak tree, pre-cut oak leaves and bird shapes on string loops, felt pens or crayons, a twig tree.

Activity 6



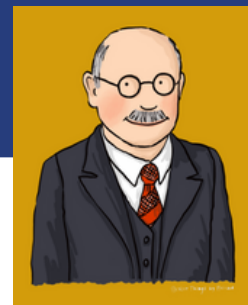
Introduction: John Laing gave hundreds, then thousands of people jobs. He was a good boss; he knew his workers and was kind to them. He paid them when they were on holiday, he took them on trips to the seaside.

John's Christian faith was important to him and in the Bible it says, 'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other' (Ephesians 4.32).

Discussion: Talk about how you could be a kind boss. You don't have to wait to be a boss before being kind to people. How can you be kind to people in school?

Activity: Colour in the letters on a poster that says: IN A WORLD WHERE YOU CAN BE ANYTHING BE KIND or TREAT PEOPLE WITH KINDNESS or BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER FORGIVING EACH OTHER. Decorate your poster.

You will need: A Bible, crayons, printed posters.



Activity 7



Introduction: John Laing had a plan for his life – one of the things he decided was to be wise and generous with his money. He had a lot of it! He gave most of his money away to different charities and tried to help people.

Discussion: When did you last help someone? When did someone last help you?

Activity: The Bible has a story about a Good Samaritan who helped someone, he gave his time and his money. Read (Luke 10.25-37) or listen to a child friendly version of it - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zf8w92p> (5 minutes 59 seconds). There is a transcript of the story there for you to read.
Act out the parable, if you have time, with simple costumes and props.
Look at leaflets from various charities.

Discussion: Who would you/school help if you were going to start or help a charity? (It could be people in wheelchairs, old people, animals, trees, poorly people, hungry people etc.)

You will need: A child friendly copy of the story of the Good Samaritan, a Bible, leaflets from various charities. Optional: Simple costumes and props, access to a computer.

Activity 8



Introduction: John Laing married a lady called Beatrice Harland in 1910. They decided that if they argued they would always be friends again before the end of the day when the sun went down. They got this idea from the Bible: “Don’t let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4.26).
You could look the verse up in a Bible e.g. The Good News Bible.
John and Beatrice were happily married for 62 years.

Discussion: Talk about what you think you have to do to be happily married?

Activity: Design a wedding anniversary card for John and Beatrice using the Bible verse.

You will need: A Bible, crayons, felt pens, art materials, plain cards, copies of the Bible verse.