# The power of humanity: assembly support

Learning objectives

Young people will:

* Consider the term ‘humanity’ and what being humanitarian means through exploring a range of humanitarian attitudes, behaviours and actions.
* Understand how the Red Cross started, and some of the work of the Red Cross in the UK and overseas.
* Reflect on their own feelings and reactions/responses to those in need.
* Explore humanitarian actions and/or attitudes they might take in their own lives.

Age range: 11–19

## Introduction

­This set of notes supports an assembly based around the film ‘the power of humanity’ exploring the work of the Red Cross. They are accompanied by a PowerPoint that introduces the film and prompts learner reflection. Although created with an assembly in mind, the materials could also be used as a stimulus for learning with a smaller group of learners, or as part of a wider unit of work exploring humanitarianism [with other Red Cross resources](http://www.redcross.org.uk/Tags/Humanitarianism).

The notes that follow are organised with references to the PowerPoint slides and the film, which is embedded on the slide and available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIWMyojzx8Y>

**Slide 1**

Display this slide as learners come into the room.

Begin the assembly/session by introducing the notion of **humanity**.

Ask learners if anyone could give an idea of what we mean by the term **humanity**.

If a prompt is needed you could ask them - what does it sound like? Is there a word they recognise? I.e. human – what does humanity mean? (Definitions are on the next slide)

**Click to slide 2.**

Here are three definitions of **humanity**. You could use these definitions to help clarify learners ideas:

**Definition 1:** ***Humanity is the state or quality of being human.***

*[Explain that this means ‘the things that make us human’,. If it is not already clear in their responses it is important to help young people understand that the state of being human can include positive things (like being kind and loving) but also weaknesses (such as making mistakes – ‘human error’) because no human is perfect.]*

**Definition 2:** ***Humanity is the collective name for all human beings.***

*[Explain that this means all humans on the planet. It is used to describe all human beings as a group together, a bit like a species. It says that we all have that in common – we are all humans]*

**Definition 3:** ***Humanity is the quality of being humane.***

*[This third definition introduces the idea of ‘being humane’ which can be explained as ‘being kind and caring towards others’. It is possible to show this humanity through empathy (sharing the feelings of others) and through actions (helping others). The idea of being humane can apply not just to other people but also to animals that we share the planet with. We talk about the ‘humane treatment of animals’ for example. You could also explore the term humane through ideas like kindness, caring and helping.]*

**Click to slide 3.**

Explain that the British Red Cross and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (made up of 189 national societies of which the British Red Cross is one) work in a humanitarianway, based on a concept (idea) of shared humanity.

For over 150 years the Red Cross Movement has promoted mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace through what have become known as its fundamental principles[[1]](#footnote-1). The Red Cross helps people in crisis around the world, no matter who they are or where they are from.

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of their work, the Red Cross made a film called [**The Power of Humanity**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIWMyojzx8Y). Today we are going to explore that power together.

**Click to slide 4.**

Read out or ask a volunteer to read out the task on the slide [(watch the film)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIWMyojzx8Y) then explore the questions as displayed on the slide with the group.

Click the image on the slide to start/link to film

When the film has reached the end once, invite learners to talk in pairs, sharing their responses. For example, if someone mentions something that they noticed in the film their partner may ask how that made them feel in response (see slide 5 for more prompts).

**Click to slide 5**

With the following prompts to support their discussion; ask learners to talk to a partner about someone or something that stood out to you in the film.

* What was happening?
* Why did it stand out?
* What feelings did you have?
* Why do you think you might have had those feelings?

You could ask two or three pairs to briefly feedback their discussions drawing out what different pairs have taken from the film – highlighting that the film covers a range of actions and emotions. **Can learners link this back to their understanding of the word humanity?**

**Click to slide 6.**

Explain that we will now watch the film one more time (you can click back to slide 5 to start the film), this time focusing on the idea of shared humanity, and on the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement’s humanitarian work. Learners can look for ideas noticed by others from the last discussion, but should focus on the following questions:

* What **actions** are taking place to help people in crisis?
* What **attitudes** or **behaviours** are being displayed towards those needing help?

*[You may choose to divide the group into two with one half looking at actions and the other at behaviours and attitudes. This will depend on how you wish to manage the group]*

This time responses could be recorded somewhere for all to see – perhaps on a flipchart or whiteboard that says ‘Being humanitarian means…’ with two columns for ‘actions’ and ‘attitudes’ [see example below]

Elicit responses and guide learners with language to support them in articulating their thoughts. Below is a list of responses that may come up from the film. You can use these to support discussion and ideas if needed.

|  |
| --- |
| Being humanitarian means |
| Actions | Attitudes |
| * Helping people who are hurt
* Bringing aid (water, food)
* Ambulances and first aid / doctors
* Helping the disabled with mobility aids
* Organised aid
* Putting up tents and building shelters for those who have lost their homes
* Planting seedlings for food
* Providing fishing nets to support recovery from disaster
* Helping people find their family members who are missing because of disaster or conflict
* Identifying remains so people know where their family members’ are/what has happened to them
* Emergency help in floods.
* Learning first aid
 | Being:* kind
* brave
* respectful
* welcoming
* hard-working
* careful
* friendly
* cheerful
* persistent / determined
* warm
* emotionally strong
* Helpful/helping
* compassionate
* caring
* considerate
* empathetic
 |

Explain that these are just some of the actions and attitudes that have guided the humanitarian work of the Red Cross Movement for the past 150 years.

**Click to slide 7.**

Read out or ask a volunteer to read out Slide 7.

*The Movement began with one person’s humanitarian attitude and action after coming across a battle where those involved in the conflict were wounded and dying on the battlefield without help. Henri Dunant, a Geneva merchant/businessman from Switzerland, decided to step in and set up a make shift hospital in a nearby church with the help of local villagers. He treated those on both sides of the conflict equally, attending to the most urgent cases of distress first and recording last goodbyes to send to loved ones.*

*The Red Cross movement has grown steadily ever since, and is now the largest humanitarian network in the world, helping people in crisis no matter who they are or where they are from. There are over 100 million members worldwide.*

Build on this information by linking back to the theme: the Power of Humanity.

The Red Cross movement shows how the power of humanity can work together, refusing to ignore those in crisis for the benefit of all.

**Click to slide 8.**

End with exploring the word ‘power’.

Ask learners to discuss with a partner:

What is powerful about the film, and what is powerful about humanitarianism?

Young people could consider the image, the discussions they have had, and the film they have watched to inform this final reflective discussion.

Ask for a few learners to share an idea or word that resonates with them after this reflection time.

**Click to slide 9.**

Close the assembly and leave learners with a closing reflection to take with them:

Although the film shows humanitarianism in action in many different and sometime challenging situations both here and around the world humanitarianism is all around us.

It begins right here in the way we interact with each other, and with those who may need help around us.

***Thinking about your own power as part of humanity, consider one humanitarian action or humanitarian attitude that you could focus on today and use in your interactions with others.***

1. The fundamental principles of the Red Cross movement are observed by every national society and the staff and volunteers within them. There are seven principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independent, voluntary service, unity and universality. These are explored in the [humanitarianism](http://www.redcross.org.uk/Tags/Humanitarianism) resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)