

Big Lunch: Sharing Stories

Event pack for young
people and adults

**GO
ALL
IN.**

National
Year of
Reading
2026

Go All In at your Big Lunch

Welcome to your Big Lunch: Sharing Stories event pack.

The National Year of Reading 2026 is a fantastic opportunity for people, groups and communities throughout the UK to connect and share stories.

This June, we're delighted to be collaborating with the National Literacy Trust, the Eden Project and EmpathyLab to mark the UK's biggest celebration of community and storytelling, bringing together:

Volunteers' Week:

1-7 June 2026

NCVO, Volunteer Scotland, WCVA and Volunteer Now

Empathy Day Festival:

4-11 June 2026

EmpathyLab

The Big Lunch:

5-8 June 2026

Eden Project

This event pack is filled with simple, fun activities from all partners to help you go all in at your Big Lunch: Sharing Stories celebration. Whether your lunch is with friends or family, neighbours or volunteers, classmates or colleagues, there's something for everyone. To discover more resources, please scan the QR codes.

Enjoy your Big Lunch: Sharing Stories celebrations. Let's go all in together!



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Change your story



In partnership with



MADE POSSIBLE BY



PARTNERED BY



Sharing Stories: If you're into it, read into it!

Here are some conversation prompts to get you started.

Which children's
book character
would you most like
to have lunch with?

Share a story you love.
What do you like to
read or listen to?

Do you have a
favourite family
recipe or memory
linked to food?

Share which of these
interests you would
you most like to dive
into and why...

- Sport
- Music
- Horror
- TV and film
- Comedy
- Gaming

Sharing Stories: Celebrating volunteers

Volunteers' Week provides a great opportunity to celebrate the incredible difference volunteers make to children and families lives across the UK.

Conversation starters

- Can you share a moment from your volunteering experience that has really stayed with you? And why?
- What would you say to encourage someone else to volunteer?
- If you had a free day to help any cause, what would you choose and why?

Did you know?

- 5.6 million adults across the UK volunteered in 2025.¹
- Volunteering provides a sense of personal achievement (89%), supports better mental health and wellbeing (75%), boosts confidence (73%) and helps develop new skills (72%).²

Become a Literacy Champion and help spark a love of reading by connecting it to the things people already care about.

This is a flexible role for anyone who wants to make a positive difference in their community.



Find out more

Sharing Stories: “Would you rather..?” reading edition

Play a game of “Would you rather..?” with a reading twist.

Would you rather...

... read a book
or listen to an
audiobook?

... read stories
set in the past
or the future?

... read the
story behind a
film or a game?

... read a story
that makes you
laugh or makes
you think?

... read fiction
or non-fiction?

... share a story
with someone
else or read on
your own?

... read something
new or re-read a
favourite?

... Why?



CONVERSATION MENU

FOR STARTERS

What small things make you smile?

What food combination sounds strange but tastes delicious?

GREAT FOR SHARING

What happens when a strawberry gets run over when crossing the road?

A: Traffic jam

TUCK IN

If you could learn a new talent instantly, what would it be?

Have you ever done something you thought you wouldn't be able to do?

SWEET STUFF

What do you love about where you live?

If you were to put on a celebration event, what would it be and why?



CONVERSATION MENU

FOR STARTERS

Are you an early bird or a night owl?

What's the most beautiful thing you've seen in nature?

GREAT FOR SHARING

Why did the volunteer bring a ladder?

A: To take their help to the next level

TUCK IN

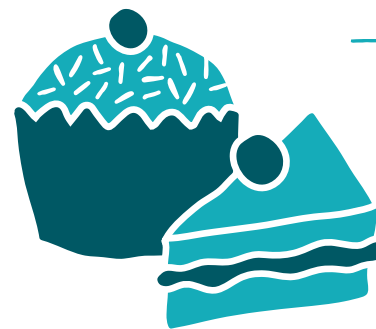
If you could try any job, what would it be?

How would you help others if you had more free time?

SWEET STUFF

What's the nicest thing someone has done for you?

If you could raise a toast to anyone, who would it be and why?





Use these to encourage everyone to swap skills, ideas and offers of help. Have a space at your do for people to fill them out, pin them up and display them.

I CAN HELP WITH...

LET'S CHAT

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS:



CAN YOU LEND A HAND WITH...?

LET'S CHAT

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS:



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**CAN YOU FIND
SOMEONE WHO..?**

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eden project Pears Foundation GO OP



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CAN YOU FIND SOMEONE WHO..?

Enjoys fixing things	Has done a fundraising activity
Is part of a local community group or club	Can speak more than one language
Can do a party trick	Loves cooking without a recipe
Helped someone learn something new	Can name more wildflowers than you

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Empathy Exchange

Connect with someone you don't know well and get to know them better. These questions have been designed to spark empathy-filled conversations. Take turns asking in pairs. Try to really LISTEN to their answers.



Which artist, writer or musician do you connect with?

Which TV show makes you happy?

What fictional character reminds you of someone you know?

When you're having a difficult day, what can other people do to help you?

What makes you, you?

Tell me a time you felt misunderstood

Tell me a time someone showed you kindness that made a difference

Where and when do you feel most comfortable?

Many thanks to the pupils of Hallam Fields Junior School, Carrick Academy, The High School of Glasgow, Moorlands Primary & Kirk Hallam Community Academy for their contributions.

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If you could be a book character for 24 hours, who would it be?

What have you achieved that you're proud of?

What makes a good life?

Would you want to be happy all the time?

What qualities do you value most in a good friend?

Which fictional world would you like to live in?

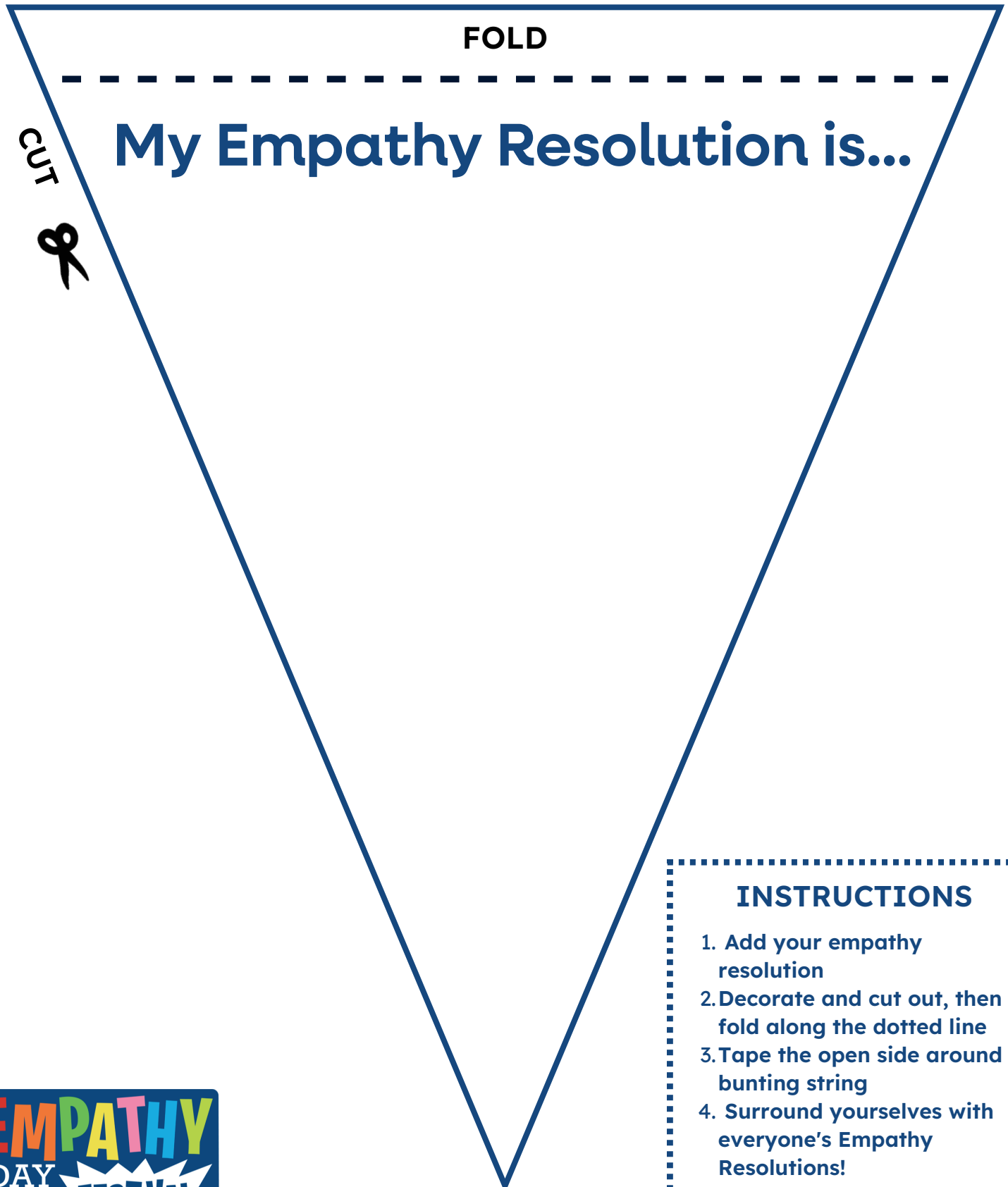
If I told you that your biggest fear is behind that door...
what do you think is behind that door?

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Make your own Empathy Resolution bunting

Use our bunting to decorate your space with Empathy Resolutions!

An Empathy Resolution is an action YOU can take - however small - to make things better for others. What will you promise to do?



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add your empathy resolution
2. Decorate and cut out, then fold along the dotted line
3. Tape the open side around bunting string
4. Surround yourselves with everyone's Empathy Resolutions!

