

Inter-Religious Education Lesson

STORY

'Friends Forever'

Begin by showing the children the picture of Muireann, Eli and Salma from the story, 'Ms Nolan's Last Day' (Theme 8). Remind them what

Ms Nolan said about them, 'Whenever you see Salma, you can be sure Muireann and Eli are close by!' Then read the story, 'Friends Forever'.

'Friends Forever'



Salma, Eli and Muireann were best friends. They were all in First class in St Nicholas' National School, and Mrs Jones was their teacher.

They lived close to each other too, and they got the same bus to and from school. When in school, they liked to run races and to play chasing with the other boys and girls in their class. They would also sit, talk and play games together. 'Friends forever?' Eli would ask. 'Forever friends!' the girls would reply.



Salma was almost eight years old. She was the oldest and the tallest of the three. She lived with her mum, her dad, her brother Abdullah

and her grandma. Her grandma had come to live with them when Salma's grandad died. She didn't speak very much English, but Salma understood her grandma when she spoke in Arabic. All of Salma's family spoke Arabic, and she and Abdullah took Arabic classes every Saturday. They liked being able to talk to their grandma, and to learn from her.

Eli was the next oldest. He was seven and a half. He lived with his mum and his dad. Eli had no brothers or sisters but he was very good



friends with his cousins, David and Dina. They lived in Galway. Every month or so, he and his parents would go to Galway to spend

time with their family there.

Muireann was the youngest of the three. She lived with her mum and her sisters Méabh and Tess. They lived next door to her Auntie Carol, Uncle Mark and their four children. Every year, her family and Auntie Carol and Uncle Mark's family went on holidays to Cork. They always had great fun together.



It was Muireann's birthday, and Salma and Eli had been invited to her party. It was their first time visiting Muireann's apartment. They

arrived straight from school with Muireann and they noticed how she dipped her fingers into a holy water font at the door and blessed herself before saying hello to her mam. Mam had some food ready for them because she knew they'd be hungry. While they were eating, Salma and Eli looked around the room. They could see a picture of Maedbh, Muireann's sister, on her First Communion day. They also saw a beautiful cross like the one in school over the door.





The friends had a great time at the party and soon it was time to go home. 'I wish you could all come over to my house someday,' said Salma.

'We'd have such fun!'

'Me too!' said Eli. 'I wish you could come and see my puppy!'

'Why don't we ask our parents if we can do it next week when we're off school for our mid-term break?' suggested Muireann.

'That's a great idea!' said Eli. 'You could both come to my house one day and Salma, we could go to yours another day. We could have such fun!' said Eli.

That evening, Eli, Salma and Muireann asked their parents if they could visit each other's houses, and they all agreed. The three friends couldn't wait!

Having read the story, check for understanding using questions such as, 'Whose birthday was it?' Then dig deeper using these or similar questions:

- What language did Salma and her family speak? Can you and your family speak any language other than English? Do you think Salma and her brother liked going to school on Saturday to learn Arabic? Why or why not?
- Eli and his family went to Galway to see his cousins. Do you live near your family, like Muireann, or do you live far away from them, like Eli? Do you think Eli would have preferred if his family lived close by? Why?
- What things did Salma and Eli notice in Muireann's apartment? Have you got any of these things in your home?

PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

T: Salma, Eli and Muireann all live in different families, but they have lots of things in common too. Today, let's pray for all families, asking God to bless them. Together let's say, 'God bless all families'.

C: God bless all families.

T: We think of families who live in Ireland, and families who live in other countries throughout the world.

C: God bless all families.

T: We think of families who have lots of children, and families who have no children.

C: God bless all families.

T: We think of families who speak English, and families who speak different languages.

C: God bless all families.

T: We think of families who are separated from each other, and families who live together.

C: God bless all families.

T: All families throughout the world are part of the one human family. We are all created by God and we are all loved by God. There is only one true God, and God loves us all more than anything or anyone ever will. God always was, he is and he always will be, so his love is eternal.

Loving God,
Continue to bless all of our homes and our families.
Watch over us, and keep us safe.

C: Amen.