

Speaking to Younger Audiences

“Taking the guide dog story to children and young people is a hugely fulfilling experience for you as a speaker and for your audience. Being part of the learning process and seeing their excitement and interest first hand is both a privilege for you, and a huge benefit to the Charity. Every enthralled face will be a potential Guide Dog ambassador for life, and it’s you who will have made that transformation. What can be more gratifying than that?”

Carrie, speaker

Contents

Sharing your story	1
Five top tips for speaking to younger audiences	2
1. Get the most out of the pre-talk phone call/email.	2
2. Be aware of audience age/development.	2
Nursery/Early Years groups/Pre-Schoolers (3-4yrs).	2
Primary/Rainbows/Brownies/Squirrels/Beavers/Cubs (5-11yrs).	2
Secondary/High School/Guides/Scouts/Explorers/Cadets (11+yrs)...	2
Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).	3
3. Think about how you will explain sight loss.	3
4. Be confident that the group’s behaviour is not down to you.	4
5. Know what you want to get across.	4
Current resources	5
The ‘Learning’ section of our website	7
Younger Audiences Session Recording	7
End of document	8

Sharing your story

What we want is for you to feel confident sharing your own personal Guide Dogs story with children and young people. Young people are our future service users, volunteers, staff members, and supporters; engaging them with powerful stories at a young age will build connections to Guide Dogs for the future. We can develop their understanding of how a person’s life could be affected by a vision impairment and how they can take positive steps to remove any barriers.

We are aware that speakers will have varying amounts of experience with different age groups. This document is intended as a guide to support you in speaking to younger audiences and to help you know what resources there are available to use in your talk if you wish. If you require further advice, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us at speakervols@guidedogs.org.uk.

Five top tips for speaking to younger audiences.

1. Get the most out of the pre-talk phone call/email.

Find out your audience size, setting, and time limit (and keep to this!). Why have they invited you in - are they starting or finishing fundraising, have they done a topic on people who help us or animals for instance, or are they a youth group with badge/award requirements they want covered? Will there be access to a screen if you want to use it? What have the audience already learned about sight loss and Guide Dogs? Who will be the staff member in charge of the group and can they help you in selecting young people to ask/answer questions? Do they know that you do/don't have a dog accompanying you? Do you have specific access requirements you want to share with them? This is your chance to get the information you need to feel fully prepared going into the talk.

2. Be aware of audience age/development.

It's not personal when younger children fidget - they're still physically learning to sit still and keep their attention focused.

Nursery/Early Years groups/Pre-Schoolers (3-4yrs). This group will generally only need to know a basic overview of sight loss and Guide Dogs: we all see things differently and some people won't be able to see the same things as you. Guide Dogs helps people who can't see very well and sometimes gives them a dog who can help show them the safe way (guide). Try to speak clearly and with enthusiasm; use photos and objects as props; ask them simple yes or no questions; if you can, introduce movement or actions such as put your hands on your head if you have heard of Guide Dogs; keep stories simple and to about 10 minutes, with time for them to stroke your dog if allowed and/or talk to you at the end (they probably won't ask questions but might like to tell you about their dogs, etc.).

Primary/Rainbows/Brownies/Squirrels/Beavers/Cubs (5-11yrs). This group can focus for increasingly longer times, up to 30 minutes, but still respond better with photos, objects, and interactive sessions. They will be able to ask simple questions.

Secondary/High School/Guides/Scouts/Explorers/Cadets (11+yrs). This group will be able to concentrate for longer periods of time. They tend to

respond best if you can relate to them and their own experiences (for instances, perhaps your story might involve assistive technology on phones or you could talk about doing your hair/makeup).

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Your group may consist or include children with SEN. There are a vast range of additional needs that children can have, and this may affect the length of time your talk should be, the nature of your communication, and if there might be any interruptions. The staff at the school/youth group are the people to provide advice on this and will know the best way to support that child while you deliver your story.

3. Think about how you will explain sight loss.

Very young children may only need to know that some people have sight loss, and this can make doing everyday things more difficult. All of us see what's around us differently - some people might wear glasses and some people might not be able to see colours. Some people might not be able to see very much at all and may need a little help to do all the things they want to do in life.

Primary aged children and above might have heard of people being blind or having sight loss but may need it explained that there are a range of vision impairments. Only a very small number of people who are called blind see nothing at all. Most will be able to see something but not everything. There is an excellent Guide Dogs video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfVCRUPnBMc> which shows the viewpoint of someone with different eye conditions. You may alternatively want to ask children to put their hands up to their eyes like binoculars to show what having tunnel vision is a little bit like and how they have to move their head to see anything other than what is immediately in front of them.

You could then get children to try to empathise with the challenges having sight loss could bring. Close your eyes. Imagine if I asked you to keep your eyes closed and the teacher called out it was playtime. Think about all the challenges you might face - finding where you put your jumper and putting it back on, standing up, trying to know where the door was for outside, not getting pushed over in the corridor, coping with any stairs or coats or bags on the ground, arriving safely in the playground, finding your friends... What would it feel like? You can now open your eyes again. Now how would it feel if you had to do all that with your eyes closed but your best friend was there at your side to take your arm and guide you? How much safer would you feel? Your best friend can't always do this though, they have their own life and family and

things to do. Guide Dogs offers people a best friend to help in the shape of our fantastic dogs who give people with sight loss the confidence to get out and about safely. Older children may like to hear about the range of services we offer children and young people, including but not solely guide dogs.

You may want to use for older children one of our videos featuring the Paralympian Libby Clegg. The video is a black screen with soundbites of voices around Libby as she grows up from being a baby through to adulthood. It is inspirational and thought provoking. You can access it at the following link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAWW8U4IRcM>. You can forward this on to a school if they would like to share it, or if you'd like to ask them to share it for you during your talk.

4. Be confident that the group's behaviour is not down to you. The teacher/leader is responsible for the young people's behaviour and safety - they should be with you and overseeing the group at all times and you defer to them. They know their school policies and the individuals involved and will be wanting the young people to represent their school/group well. At no point should you be left alone with individuals or a group. Questions and answer sessions are best run by talking to a teacher/group leader beforehand and agreeing that they will select the young person to ask/answer the question. Demonstrations i.e., blindfolded walks, sighted guide activities, handling guide dogs in harness, using a harness for a walk must not take place as we are not covered by our insurance. If you are happy to have your picture taken, schools and youth groups will often want photos to share in parent newsletters and on social media - you can ask them to add in the hashtag #GuideDogs so our social media team will be able to share this wider. Please don't take your own photos or encourage young people to follow anything other than Guide Dog's official social media channels.

5. Know what you want to get across. What's the one key message about Guide Dogs in your story that you want them to go home and tell their families? Try not to convey too much information. After you deliver your talk, you may want to discuss with the teacher or youth leader further ways for the group to get involved - you could leave them with the 'Learn About Guide Dogs' leaflet or signpost them straight away to learning resources on [guidedogs.org.uk/learning](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/learning) or fundraising resources (use our fundraising product guide), with our key schools campaign being Fund Race where they can sign up online at [guidedogs.org.uk/Fundrace](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/Fundrace) for free. We also have a number of resources that you can give out to children to encourage their connection to our

charity - stickers go down well with children from 3-11 years as does a thank you card to the teacher/leader organising the talk.

Current resources

Below are images of some resources available.



Please contact Speakervols@guidedogs.org.uk or call 0345 143 0192 if you would like any of the following sent. Some of these are also available to download from the VIP.

- Stickers
- Bookmarks
- One Voice - The leaflet which is produced each year which has the latest up to date information about Guide Dogs and is the source that both staff and volunteers use to ensure we're all using the latest information and figures.
- Learn About Guide Dogs leaflets - information for schools and youth groups about how they can support guide dogs and fundraise.
- How you can help leaflets - information for adults about the different ways they can support guide dogs either through fundraising or volunteering.
- Thank you cards
- Certificates
- Interactive Session Plans - we have three session plans available if you are given more time and would like to cover something in addition to your own story. Each one lasts approximately 20 minutes. The sessions are 'Let's look at coins' (5-11 years); 'Story Sack' (3-7 years); and 'Shopping' (5-11 years).
- Activity sheets (to leave with the group or do after your talk)
 - Wordsearch
 - Trainee guide dog colouring sheet
 - Bookmark activity - make your own bookmark
 - Braille alphabet - colour in the spots to spell out your name
 - Use your senses - match the words to the correct senses

Below are some images of the Guide Dogs Activity Sheets.



Guide Dogs wordsearch

Highlight these words in the word square.

- Eyes
- Labrador
- Dog
- Food
- Puppy
- Bowl
- Sight
- Guide

W	W	W	M	I	L	A	Z	S	D
R	E	D	I	U	G	W	S	O	H
P	O	W	A	J	S	Q	O	O	O
B	Z	D	F	R	E	E	B	B	E
R	V	G	A	K	Y	F	T	Y	S
P	N	O	O	R	E	U	O	B	I
X	U	D	Q	N	B	V	W	T	G
L	I	P	G	O	R	A	O	L	H
H	J	L	P	V	Z	R	L	X	T
D	O	O	F	Y	W	U	G	E	F



Trainee Guide Dog

Facts

A guide dog puppy's eyes don't open for the first 10-14 days of its life.

It takes two years to fully train a guide dog.

A guide dog owner could have more than eight dogs in a lifetime.

The first guide dogs were trained in 1931.

The most common breed of guide dog is a cross between a labrador and golden retriever.





Guide Dogs bookmark

You will need:
A square piece of paper or card - 21cm x 21cm

- 1 Fold the paper in half diagonally to create a triangle.
- 2 Take the top of the triangle and fold it down until the point is level with the long edge.
- 3 Fold the right corner up to the point at the top then fold it over and tuck the end inside.
- 4 Do the same with the left corner.
- 5 You can then decorate your bookmark, by drawing or sticking eyes, colouring your bookmark in, or adding additional pieces of card. Search online for different corner bookmark ideas and video tutorials.



Braille alphabet

Braille alphabet grid showing letters A through Z with their corresponding dot patterns.

Write your name in the boxes on the first row

Use the Braille alphabet to colour in the spots of the second row

© 2013 by the Guide Dogs Association. All rights reserved. 020337990. 20027-210000



Your senses

Can you match the word to the sense?

Shiny	Loud	Fresh	Soft	Sweet	Colourful	Bright
Dark	Square	Quiet	Squeaky	Damp	Earthy	Fishy
Hard	Wet	Cold	Hot	Sour	Salty	
Sight	Hearing	Taste	Touch	Smell		

The 'Learning' section of our website

Our learning pages can be found at the following link www.guidedogs.org.uk/learning. These include lesson plans and activities for primary and secondary schools, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and ideas for student programmes, like National Citizens Service and Duke of Edinburgh.

Younger Audiences Session Recording

One of our speaker trainers Carrie, very kindly ran a session for us talking through how she adapts her talks for younger audiences. You can access a recording of this session at the following link

https://guidedogs.zoom.us/rec/share/TF9G2x66YEMSXHBWSiwvnWrQ46RkSUmbeZkDeLUXrn0FR84p_uQHMULbqICA97I9.BLw-Dzmuwu5XIVkQ?startTime=1688556844000

Passcode: Youth12!

End of document