

Bring Your Peace Corps Experience Home With **Speakers Match**



PAUL D. COVERDELL

worldwise
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Handbook for RPCVs

AMY AND GREG CLARK, RETURNED VOLUNTEERS FROM NEPAL

Welcome to Speakers Match

As a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV), sharing your story is at the heart of fulfilling Peace Corps' third goal: helping Americans develop a better understanding of other cultures. On behalf of World Wise Schools, our participating teachers and their students, thank you for your willingness to share your unique Peace Corps experience!

The purpose of this handbook is to help make your Speakers Match participation as smooth, meaningful, and enjoyable as possible. It includes tips for communicating with the teacher prior to your visit, a template for helping you structure your visit, and suggestions for age-appropriate topics and classroom activities.

In addition to using these resources, visit engage@peacecorps.gov to request free Peace Corps materials to share with your student audience.

We hope these resources will be helpful in guiding you through your classroom visit, and that your participation in Speakers Match will provide an enjoyable and rewarding way to share your Peace Corps story.

Please make sure we have your most current address, phone number, and email so we can contact you with speaker requests. To update your information, or if you have questions about Speakers Match, please contact World Wise Schools at wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov.



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Preparing for Your Classroom Visit



About Today's Classroom

Many of today's effective classrooms share the following characteristics, which may be helpful to keep in mind as you plan your presentation:

- Lessons are interactive and “hands-on.” Students are often seated in groups and participate in their learning through discussions and group activities.
- Lessons are often interdisciplinary, pulling together essential ideas from several subject areas. (Language arts, geography, and science, for example.)
- Teachers encourage creative thinking and problem-solving.
- Classes are diverse, containing a range of ability levels and cultural backgrounds. Lessons reflect an active appreciation of students' diverse talents, experiences, and heritage.

Communicate with the Teacher

Your classroom visit will be most successful if you and the teacher both have clear goals and expectations and have communicated to develop a plan for your visit.

Contact the teacher to find out:

- What topics have the students been learning that your presentation might connect to?
- What is the age or grade level of the students?
- How many students will you be addressing? Where will the students be located (classroom, auditorium, etc.)?
- How much time will you have?
- Are there any special needs or behavioral issues you should take into consideration?
- If necessary, what resources or technology are available?

Have the teacher fill out [this guide](#) to help in the planning and implementation of your presentation.

Planning Your Presentation



After communicating with the teacher, develop a plan for your presentation. Choose a topic that both you and the students will enjoy.

After developing your presentation, contact the teacher again to share your plan and find out if it seems appropriate for the audience you will be addressing and the teacher's goals for your visit.

- Planning Your Classroom Visit
- Activity Suggestions for:
 - Kindergarten–2nd grade
 - 3rd–5th grade
 - 6th–8th grade
 - 9th–12th grade

Activity Suggestions K-2nd grade



What should I know about this audience?

Students typically:

- Are between 5-8 years old
- Learn new information best when it is connected to their own experiences (e.g., *Can you think of a time when you heard someone speaking another language?*)
- Are eager to respond to questions and will often do so by sharing personal stories
- Are interested in the ways they are similar to, and different from, others
- Do best when instructions for activities are clear and concise
- Enjoy opportunities to move, handle materials, and interact with peers

What could I bring with me?

You may want to bring:

- Items you brought back from your host country (especially things students can touch)
- Clothing typical in your host country
- A book or example of writing in the language of your host country
- Photographs* showing your life in your host country
- Music* from your host country
- Videos* you took in your host country

**Be sure to ask the teacher about the availability of projectors, speakers, or any technology you may need, or arrange to bring these items yourself*

What topics could I share?

Topics related to your host country and its culture:

- Lives of children in your host country (typical school day, work and play, families)
- A popular children's song, story, or game from your host country
- Weather and climate; plant and animal life in your host country
- Your home and neighbors in your host country
- Food and mealtimes; how people obtain, prepare, and eat their food
- A festival or celebration in your host country
- Interesting facts about your country such as the money, national anthem, flag, and dances

Topics related to your service:

- Your job or area of service; something new you had to learn in order to perform it
- A way that you helped someone in your host country; a way someone helped you
- Something important you learned from being a Peace Corps Volunteer

***What types of activities could I do with the students?*****Using objects and artifacts**

Objects can be a great way to engage students. They spark curiosity, and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Select artifacts that represent your Peace Corps experience. They might be things that you used in daily life, that were created by people in your country, or that have special significance to you. Think about what would be most interesting to students about these objects. Why did you bring them home? Do you still use them? What would you like students to understand about your experience that the objects can help them understand? Think about including modern objects from your country as well as traditional ones.

Suggested activity:***Peace Corps Backpack***

Choose 5-8 objects to place in your backpack that represent how you lived in your host country (e.g., bucket for fetching water; book for teaching school; candle for light at night; clothing from host country; soccer ball for playing games).

Ask students about what they pack in their backpacks to get ready for their day. Ask what they think they would need to pack to get ready for a trip to another country. Allow students to remove one item at a time from your backpack. Can they guess what it is? Why did you need it? Allow opportunities for interaction with the objects, such as letting a student try on a piece of clothing. As you discuss the items, encourage students to share ideas and ask questions.

Using photos

Photographs, videos, and visuals are also a great way to engage students with your story. They are an excellent starting point for

children to begin learning about another place and culture. Many students will have little knowledge about your country, so images will help students understand what life is like there. You could select photographs that relate to a certain theme – food, living conditions, geography/climate, your project work, etc. You can put them in a slide show, or perhaps ask the teacher to make copies so the students can look at them more closely. Encourage children to make connections between themselves and the people in the picture.

Suggested activity:

Photos Tell a Story

As you tell your story and show your pictures to the students, ask them to imagine they are in the photos, and to make observations using their senses. *Pretend you are in this photo. What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you think is around you that is not in the picture? What are you feeling?* Students could imagine a dialogue taking place in the picture, write captions for the picture, or draw another picture that they think would fit in this set.

You could use photographs to compare aspects of daily life in your host country with the students' daily lives. *What are the similarities and differences in how we do the daily activity? Why do you think those differences exist?*

Using stories

Stories can provide an excellent learning opportunity for students. You could tell a folktale or story that was frequently told in your community, or read a picture book

or story that takes place in your country. Stories can tap into children's imagination and creativity, and allow them to make an emotional connection to people in a distant country. Stories can help students understand and appreciate other cultures and regions, and see universal characteristics of humanity. You could discuss storytelling in your country: Who tells stories? When and where do people gather to listen to stories? What stories are told over and over?

Suggested approaches to storytelling:

- Use a puppet to tell the story. Puppets can also be used to help create discussion by asking questions either to you or the students.
- Create an unusual story time by having the students sit around an imaginary camp fire to listen to your story. Try to create a memory for the students.
- Have the class create an art piece representing the story; this can be based on the characters in the story, such as creating life size drawings, what they think happens next in the story, or even a book jacket design for the story.
- Bring a box of props to accompany your story and use them throughout your reading.
- Help students identify with the story. Think of the emotions that are illustrated by your story: fear, confusion, happiness, etc. Ask the students to think of a time when they felt this emotion—what caused it, and how they responded to it.

Activity Suggestions 3rd–5th grade



What should I know about this audience?

Students typically:

- Are between 7 -11 years old
- Learn new information best when it is connected to their own experiences
- Enjoy hands-on activities, games, and opportunities to discuss ideas with peers
- Are usually able to work well with peers in small groups
- Are interested in others and will likely be curious about you (your present life as well as your Peace Corps experience)
- Enjoy opportunities to ask questions in response to information shared by others

What could I bring with me?

You may want to bring:

- Items you brought back from your host country (especially things students can touch)
- Clothing typical in your host country
- A book or example of writing in the language of your host country
- Photographs* showing your life in your host country
- Music* from your host country
- Videos* you took in your host country

**Be sure to ask the teacher about the availability of projectors, speakers, or any technology you may need, or arrange to bring these items yourself*

What topics could I share?

Topics related to your host country and its culture:

- Lives of children in your host country (typical school day, work and play, families)
- A popular children's song, story, or game from your host country
- Weather and climate; plant and animal life in your host country
- Ecology of your host country and local environmental concerns
- Family relationships; roles and views of children, teens, adults, elders; gender roles
- Your home and neighbors in your host country
- Food and mealtimes; how people

- obtain, prepare, and eat their food
- A festival or celebration in your host country
- Interesting facts about your country such as the money, national anthem, flag, and dances

Topics related to your service:

- Your job or area of service; something new you had to learn in order to perform it
- A way that you helped someone in your host country; a way someone helped you
- Something important you learned from being a Peace Corps Volunteer
- Your volunteer experience from when you were younger; how this encouraged you to consider Peace Corps
- A funny situation

What types of activities could I do with the students?

Using objects and artifacts

Objects can be a great way to engage students. They spark curiosity, and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Select artifacts that represent your Peace Corps experience. They might be things that you used in daily life, that were created by people in your country, or that have special significance to you. Think about what would be most interesting to students about these objects. Why did you bring them home? Do you still use them? What would you like students to understand about your experience that the objects can help them understand? Think about including modern objects from your country as well as traditional ones.

Suggested activities:

Peace Corps Backpack

Choose 5-8 objects to place in your backpack that represent how you lived in your host country (e.g., bucket for fetching water; book for teaching school; candle for light at night; clothing from host country; soccer ball for playing games).

Ask students about what they pack in their backpacks to get ready for their day. Ask what they think they would need to pack to get ready for a trip to another country. Allow students to remove one item at a time from your backpack. Can they guess what it is? Why did you need it? Allow opportunities for interaction with the objects, such as letting a student try on a piece of clothing. As you discuss the items, encourage students to share ideas and ask questions.



Museum in the Classroom

Place 8-10 objects or pictures from your host country and your Peace Corps experience around the room (e.g. book in another language, eating utensil, clothing, photo of your service site). Write a question to place next to each object (e.g. *What do you think this is used for? What do you think this is made out of? Why do you think I needed this every day?*)

Split students into groups of 2-3. Allow groups one minute to visit each object, and then rotate clockwise to the next one. Groups should write down responses to the questions you placed next to the objects, then come back together as a whole group to discuss the objects and their significance. As you talk about the items, incorporate stories about your life in your host country and your service.

Using photos

Photographs, videos, and visuals are also a great way to engage students with your story. They are an excellent starting point for children to begin learning about another place and culture. Many students will have little knowledge about your country, so images will help students understand what life is like there. You could select photographs that relate to a certain theme: food, living conditions, geography/climate, your project work, etc. You can put them in a slide show, or perhaps ask the teacher to make copies so the students can look at them more closely. Encourage children to make connections between themselves and the people in the picture.

Suggested activities:

Photos Tell a Story

As you tell your story and show your pictures to the students, ask them to imagine they are in the photos, and to make observations using their senses. *Pretend you are in this photo. What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you think is around you that is not in the picture? What are you feeling?* Students could imagine a dialogue taking place in the picture, write captions for the picture, or draw another picture that they think would fit in this set.

You could use photographs to compare aspects of daily life in your host country with the students' daily lives. *What are the similarities and differences in how we do the daily activity? Why do you think those differences exist?*

Peace Corps Photo Story

Select several different photographs from your Peace Corps experience and group them together. Have students work in small groups, and give each group a set of photos. Ask the students to study the photos carefully and make observations. *What do you notice about the people? The geography? What else do you see?*

Have students discuss the photos and create a story. They should put the photos in the order they think makes sense, and develop a story. They could include conversations that might be taking place in their story.

Using stories

Stories can provide an excellent learning opportunity for students. You could tell a folktale or story that was frequently told in your community, or read a picture book or story that takes place in your country. Stories can tap into children’s imagination and creativity, and allow them to make an emotional connection to people in a distant country. Stories can help students understand and appreciate other cultures and regions, and see universal characteristics of humanity. You could discuss storytelling in your country: Who tells stories? When and where do people gather to listen to stories? What stories are told over and over?

Suggested approaches to storytelling:

- Bring a box of props to accompany your story and use them throughout your reading.
- Help students identify with the story: Think of the emotions that are illustrated by your story: fear, confusion, happiness, etc. Ask the students to think of a time when they felt this emotion—what caused it, and how they responded to it.
- Does your story involve some kind of conflict or problem? Stop mid-way through the story and ask students to brainstorm solutions to the problem. Then finish the story and discuss how the outcome compared to what they were expecting.
- Think about themes. What themes or “morals” are told through this story? What stories do we use in our culture to teach that same theme? Once the themes have been identified, have students write their own stories that teach the same lesson or moral.
- Have the class create an art piece representing the story; this can be based on the characters in the story, such as creating life size drawings, what they think happens next in the story, or even a book jacket design for the story.



Activity Suggestions 6th–8th grade

What should I know about this audience?

Students typically:

- Are between 10-14 years old
- Are curious, energetic, and idealistic
- Learn new information best when it is connected to their own experiences
- Prefer active learning experiences and opportunities to interact with peers
- Are moving from concrete to abstract thinking
- Enjoy solving “real world” problems

What could I bring with me?

You may want to bring:

- Items you brought back from your host country (especially things students can touch)
- Clothing typical in your host country
- A book or example of writing in the language of your host country
- Photographs* showing your life in your host country
- Music* from your host country
- Videos* you took in your host country

**Be sure to ask the teacher about the availability of projectors, speakers, or any technology you may need, or arrange to bring these items yourself*



What topics could I share?

Topics related to your host country and its culture:

- Lives of children and adolescents in your host country (typical school day, work and play, families)
- Your home and neighbors in your host country
- Food and mealtimes; how people obtain, prepare, and eat their food
- Ecology of your host country and local environmental concerns
- Family relationships; roles and views

- of children, teens, adults, elders;
gender roles
- A cultural difference to which you had to adjust
- What school is like for children in your host country

Topics related to your service:

- Your job or area of service; something new you had to learn in order to perform it
- Something important you learned from being a Peace Corps Volunteer
- When and why you became interested in joining Peace Corps
- Something that was especially challenging but rewarding for you in your work
- Your volunteer experience from when you were younger; how this encouraged you to consider Peace Corps
- How your service changed your perspective on something
- The role of your counterpart or other host country nationals with whom you worked
- A funny situation

What types of activities could I do with the students?

Using objects and artifacts

Objects can be a great way to engage students. They spark curiosity, and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Select artifacts that represent your Peace Corps experience. They might be things that you used in daily life, that were created by people in your country, or that have special significance to you. Think about what would be most interesting to students about these objects. Why did you bring them home? Do

you still use them? What would you like students to understand about your experience that the objects can help them understand? Think about including modern objects from your country as well as traditional ones.

Museum in the Classroom

Place 8-10 objects or pictures from your host country and your Peace Corps experience around the room (e.g. book in another language, eating utensil, clothing, photo of your service site). Write a question to place next to each object (e.g. *What do you think this is used for? What do you think this is made out of? Why do you think I needed this every day?*) Split students into groups of 2-3. Allow groups one minute to visit each object, and then rotate clockwise to the next one. Groups should write down responses to the questions you placed next to the objects, then come back together as a whole group to discuss the objects and their significance. As you talk about the items, incorporate stories about your life in your host country and your service.

What I Took With Me; What I Brought Back

Prepare two backpacks, each containing 5-6 objects. The first backpack (*What I Took*) should contain objects representing your preparations for living in your host country (e.g. language dictionary, map, pictures of family). The second should contain objects representing what you brought back or learned from your experience (e.g. cultural expressions/artwork; a picture of a project site; a book you read in a new language; etc.) Discuss how life in Peace Corps changed your perspective. Relate to students' lives by asking them to consider times when they have been in new places, situations, or cultures. How can challenges impact people in positive ways?



Using Photos

Photographs, videos, and visuals are also a great way to engage students with your story. They are an excellent starting point for children to begin learning about another place and culture. Many students will have little knowledge about your country, so images will help students understand what life is like there. You could select photographs that relate to a certain theme – food, living conditions, geography/climate, your project work, etc. You can put them in a slide show, or perhaps ask the teacher to make copies so the students can look at them more closely. Encourage the children to make connections between themselves and the people in the picture.

Peace Corps Photo Story

Select several different photographs from your Peace Corps experience and group them together. Have students work in small groups, and give each group a set of photos. Ask the students to study the photos carefully and make observations. *What do you notice about the people? The geography? What else do you see?*

Have students discuss the photos and create a story. They should put the photos in the order they think makes sense, and develop a story. They could include conversations that might be taking place in their story.

Using Stories

Stories can provide an excellent learning opportunity for students. You could tell a folktale or story that was frequently told in your community, or read a picture book or story that takes place in your country. Stories can tap into children’s imagination and creativity, and allow them to make an emotional connection to people in a distant country. Stories can help students understand and appreciate other cultures and regions, and see universal characteristics of humanity. You could discuss storytelling in your country: Who tells stories? When and where do people gather to listen to stories? What stories are told over and over?

Suggested approaches to storytelling:

- Have the class create an art piece representing the story.
- Bring a box of props to accompany your story and use them throughout your reading.
- Help students identify with the story: Think of the emotions that are illustrated by your story: fear, confusion, happiness, etc. Ask the students to think of a time when they felt this emotion—what caused it, and how they responded to it.
- What themes or “morals” are told through this story? What stories do we use in our culture to teach that same theme? Once the themes have been identified, have students write their own stories that teach the same lesson or moral.
- Does your story involve some kind of conflict or problem? Stop mid-way through the story and ask students to brainstorm solutions to the problem. Then finish the story and discuss how the outcome compared to what they were expecting.
- A story or folktale can be a great way to prompt thinking about deeper issues. Have students think about the cultural issues that motivated characters in the story. What does the story tell us about values, religion, gender roles, and other aspects of culture? Could this story take place in the students’ culture? Why or why not?

Activity Suggestions 9th–12th grade



What should I know about this audience?

Students typically:

- Are between 14-18 years old
- Learn new information best when it is connected to their own experiences
- Value social interactions and personal relationships
- Have developed abstract and relative thinking and are able to see multiple perspectives and gray areas
- Can understand complex cultural concepts
- Are beginning to think about the future and their relationship to the world

What could I bring with me?

You may want to bring:

- Items you brought back from your host country (especially things students can touch)
- Clothing typical in your host country
- A book or example of writing in the language of your host country
- Photographs* showing your life in your host country
- Music* from your host country
- Videos* you took in your host country

**Be sure to ask the teacher about the availability of projectors, speakers, or any technology you may need, or arrange to bring these items yourself*

What topics could I share?

Topics related to your host country and its culture:

- Lives of adolescents in your host country
- A festival or celebration in your host country and its cultural significance; rites of passage
- Ecology of your host country and local environmental concerns
- Family relationships; roles and views of children, teens, adults, elders; gender roles
- Communication and conversational customs in your host country
- A cultural difference to which you had to adjust

Topics related to your service:

- Your job or area of service; something new you had to learn in order to perform it
- When and why you became interested in joining Peace Corps
- Something that was especially challenging but rewarding for you in your work
- Your volunteer experience from when you were younger; how this encouraged you to consider Peace Corps
- How your service changed your perspective on something
- A funny situation

What types of activities could I do with the students?**Using objects and artifacts**

Objects can be a great way to engage students. They spark curiosity, and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Select artifacts that represent your Peace Corps experience. They might be things that you used in daily life, that were created by people in your country, or that have special significance to you. Think about what would be most interesting to students about these objects. Why did you bring them home? Do

you still use them? What would you like students to understand about your experience that the objects can help them understand? Think about including modern objects from your country as well as traditional ones.

What I Took With Me; What I Brought Back

Prepare two backpacks, each containing 5-6 objects.

The first backpack (*What I Took*) should contain objects representing your preparations for living in your host country (e.g. language dictionary, map, pictures of family). The second should contain objects representing what you brought back or learned from your experience (e.g. cultural expressions/artwork; a picture of a project site; a book you read in a new language; etc.) Discuss how life in Peace Corps changed your perspective. Relate to students' lives by asking them to consider times when they have been in new places, situations, or cultures. How can challenges impact people in positive ways?

Using Photos

Photographs, videos, and visuals are also a great way to engage students with your story. They are an excellent starting point for children to begin learning about another place and culture. Many students will have little knowledge about your country, so images will help students understand what life is like there. You could select photographs that relate to a certain theme—food, living conditions, geography/climate, your project work, etc. You can put them in a slide show, or perhaps ask the teacher to make copies so the students can look at them more closely. Encourage students to make connections between themselves and the people in the picture.

Peace Corps Photo Story

Select several different photographs from your Peace Corps experience and group them together. Have students work in small groups, and give each group a set of photos. Ask the students to study the photos carefully and make observations. *What do you notice about the people? The geography? What else do you see?*

Have students discuss the photos and create a story. They should put the photos in the order they think makes sense, and develop a story. They could include conversations that might be taking place in their story.

Drawing Conclusions from Photos

As you tell your story and show pictures, have students make a list of observations about the pictures and questions they might have. After the students have seen all the pictures, ask them, *If you could only use one photograph to tell this story, which one would you choose?* Allow a few students to share their choice and their reasoning.

Have students think about what would be left out of the story if they were to only see this one picture. Have students think about how photographs that we see in newspapers, magazines, or on websites, shape our view of the world and other people and cultures.

Using Stories

Stories can provide an excellent learning opportunity for students. You could tell a folktale or story that was frequently told in your community, or read a picture book or story that takes place in your country. Stories can tap into children's imagination and creativity, and allow them to make an emotional connection to people in a distant

country. Stories can help students understand and appreciate other cultures and regions, and see universal characteristics of humanity. You could discuss storytelling in your country: Who tells stories? When and where do people gather to listen to stories? What stories are told over and over?

Suggested approaches to storytelling:

- Have the class create an art piece representing the story.
- Use images or props to add to your story.
- Think of the emotions that are illustrated by your story: fear, confusion, happiness, etc. Ask the students to think of a time when they felt this emotion—what caused it, and how they responded to it.
- What themes or “morals” are told through this story? What stories do we use in our culture to teach that same theme? Once the themes have been identified, have students write their own stories that teach the same lesson or moral.
- Does your story involve some kind of conflict or problem? Stop mid-way through the story and ask students to brainstorm solutions to the problem. Then finish the story and discuss how the outcome compared to what they were expecting.
- A story or folktale can be a great way to prompt thinking about deeper issues. Have students think about the cultural issues that motivated characters in the story. What does the story tell us about values, religion, gender roles, and other aspects of culture? Could this story take place in the students' culture? Why or why not?

Activity Suggestions

College Classrooms

Speaking about your Peace Corps experience for a college classroom or adult audience can be intimidating, but the important thing to remember is that the basic tenets of teaching and learning apply to all age groups. Presenting to adults simply provides you the opportunity to include more details from your service and integrate some of the complex issues that can be difficult to share with younger audiences. With this audience, you may also want to be prepared for some questions about the Peace Corps in general.

What should I know about this audience?

Students typically:

- Are thinking about the future and their relationship to the world
- Have developed abstract and relative thinking – are able to see multiple perspectives and gray areas
- Can understand complex cultural concepts

What topics could I share?

When speaking to a college classroom, be sure to work with the professor to determine what topics are most applicable to the event.

Topics related to your host country and its culture:

- Lives of host country nationals
- Ecology of your host country and local environmental concerns
- Family relationships; roles and views of children, teens, adults, elders; gender roles



- Communication and conversational customs in your host country
- A cultural difference to which you had to adjust
- Rites of passage

Topics related to your service:

- Your job or area of service; something new you had to learn in order to perform it
- Something that was especially challenging but rewarding for you in your work
- Your volunteer experience from when you were younger; how this encouraged you to consider Peace Corps
- How your service changed your perspective on something
- A funny situation or lesson learned from a linguistic or cultural misunderstanding

Topics related to Peace Corps in general:

- General information about the Peace Corps:
 - [Downloadable resources](#) including PowerPoint presentations and fact sheets can be found on the Peace Corps website
- When and why you became interested in joining Peace Corps

What could I bring with me?

You may want to bring:

- Items you brought back from your host country Clothing typical in your host country
- A book or example of writing in the language of your host country
- Photographs* showing your life in your host country
- Music* from your host country
- Videos* you took in your host country

*Be sure to ask the professor about the availability of any technology you may need, or arrange to bring these items yourself

What types of activities could I do?**Using objects and artifacts**

Objects can be a great way to engage people. They spark curiosity, and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Select artifacts that represent your Peace Corps experience. They might be things that you used in daily life, that were created by people in your country, or that have special significance to you.

Think about what would be most interesting about these objects. Why did you bring them home? Do you still use them? What would you

like people to understand about your experience that the objects can help them understand? Think about including modern objects from your country as well as traditional ones.

Using Photos

Photographs, videos, and visuals are also a great way to connect. They are an excellent starting point for learning about another place and culture. Many people will have little knowledge about your country of service, so images will help them understand what life is like there. You could select photographs that relate to a certain theme – food, living conditions, geography/climate, your project work, etc. You can put the photos into a slide show and encourage the group to make connections between themselves and the people in the pictures.

Using Stories

Stories can provide an excellent learning opportunity. You could tell a folktale or story that was frequently told in your community, or read a picture book or story that takes place in your country. Stories can tap into imagination and creativity, and allow for an emotional connection to people in a distant country. Stories can help people understand and appreciate other cultures and regions, and see universal characteristics of humanity. You could discuss storytelling in your country: Who tells stories? When and where do people gather to listen to stories? What stories are told over and over?

Tips

for a Successful Presentation

1. **Be prepared.** Organize your ideas and make sure you have all necessary equipment and resources. Arrive early. Allow extra time to check in at the front office, find the classroom, and set up for your presentation.
2. **Communicate with the host.** Every classroom is unique and the teacher may wish to focus on specific aspects of your Peace Corps experience based upon their curriculum goals.
3. **Promote participation.** Speak clearly and make sure students can hear you. Be conscious of your vocabulary level. Engage learners with humor and brief anecdotes, and share objects and pictures. Ask questions, and be open to the questions and interests of the class.
4. **Encourage students to think and make connections.** Your presentation should do more than provide facts. Discussions should encourage students to make connections between culture, geography, and experiences that are both similar to, and different from, their own.
5. **Respect cultural differences and provide balance.** Remind students that you are presenting just one perspective about your host country and Peace Corps, and many others exist. Try not to reinforce cultural stereotypes. Keep in mind that there may be students from your host country in the class, or that you might be the only connection students have to the country.
6. **Inform and transform.** Think about the broader aims of your presentation beyond just giving information about your host country. An effective presentation will help students develop an appreciation for diversity, and embrace the values of volunteerism and service.
7. **Share your experience.** Help the Peace Corps to document RPCV participation in third goal activities by registering any Speakers Match speaking event online with [Peace Corps Third Goal](#).

Learn

From Other RPCV Speakers



The resources below provide insight from Returned Peace Corps Volunteers on strategies for sharing your Peace Corps story with students.

- Podcast. *Telling Your Peace Corps Story: Interview with Jody Olsen*
Enjoy this interview with former Peace Corps Deputy Director Jody Olsen (RPCV Tunisia, 1966-1968) as she discusses how to tell a great story. Essential components of storytelling, tips for speaking in classrooms, and using a variety of media for storytelling are included.
- Video. *Volunteer Testimonial, featuring Alyssa Bittenbender*
Join Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Alyssa Bittenbender (Zambia, 2004-2006) as she visits a preschool class and discusses the importance of sharing your Peace Corps story with students.
- Article. *Crafting Your Peace Corps Story for Third Goal Activities, by Robert Revere.*
In this article from *Hotline*, Peace Corps' newsletter for Returned Volunteers, RPCV Robert Revere (Morocco, 2006-2008) provides suggestions for developing and communicating your Peace Corps story.
- Story. *A Straw Fence the Height of a Man, by Michael Varga*
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Michael Varga (Chad, 1977-1979) shares a story about his Peace Corps experience, as told during his visit to a 6th grade classroom.
- Additional suggestions from RPCVs: [Addressing Students and Youth Groups](#), [Community Outreach Ideas](#), and [Downloadable Resources](#) provided by Peace Corps Third Goal.

Celebrating Your Success



Please help the Peace Corps to document RPCV participation in third goal activities by registering any Speakers Match speaking event online with [Peace Corps Third Goal](#).

Additionally, tell World Wise Schools about your Speakers Match experience. We use this feedback to develop suggestions for other RPCVs, to create useful materials in support of the program, and as testimonials to encourage more RPCVs to join Speakers Match. Email us at wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov to tell us all about the event.

Finally, if you move, change your phone number or email address, or can no longer participate in Speakers Match, please be sure to contact us at wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov with your updated information.



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