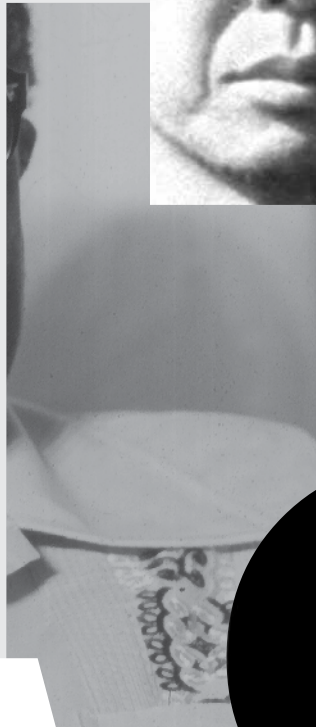
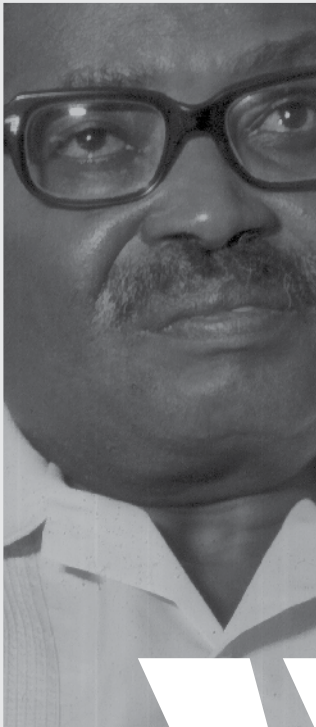


**SPEAK FREE**  
**BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE**  
PLAY SCRIPT

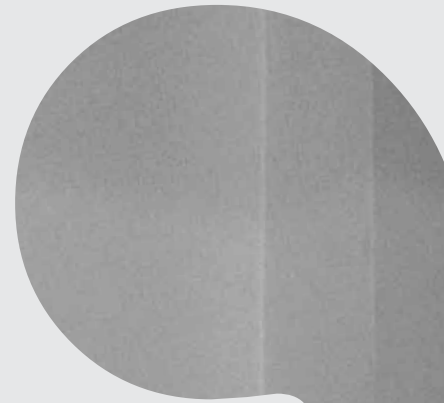
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[www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)

# BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE

## PLAY SCRIPT

### 11 CHARACTERS

**Narrator**

**Peter Benenson**

**Kim Dae-Jung**

**Maria Gillespie**

**Diana Redhouse**

**Guard**

**Voices 1-5**

### ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

#### NARRATOR

A school student who is telling the story of Amnesty International by respectfully questioning some of the people who have been involved over the years.

#### PETER BENENSON

A distinguished, passionate, elderly lawyer; the founder of Amnesty International.

#### KIM, DAE-JUNG

A Nobel Prize winner and the President of South Korea. He was also a University Professor in the USA.

#### MARIA GILLESPIE

A courageous Uruguayan girl who was arrested and tortured when she was 15 years old. Although she only spoke Spanish then, you will read her part in English. She speaks in a firm and determined manner to the guard (even though she would have been very frightened).

#### DIANA REDHOUSE

An artist and Amnesty activist in her 40s, she is enthusiastic and well-informed.

#### GUARD

An unpleasant bully who used to be in the military and who shouts at prisoners in a threatening manner.

#### VOICES 1-5

Amnesty activists from the past 50 years

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STAGING THE PLAY

- Display the PowerPoint slideshow in the background (from **CD**).
- The cast stand in a semicircle. Each actor takes a few steps forward when their part comes up and then steps back again when they have finished.
- During the play an LED 'candle' is passed from speaker to speaker once (except for the prison guard). As they speak, the relevant PowerPoint images are projected on the screen.
- Using stage lighting, the spotlight focuses on a single candle at the beginning of the play. As each character speaks, the light enlarges to encompass them until the whole stage is lit. The spotlight then narrows to focus back on the candle at the end.
- Ask interactive questions during the play. For example, when 'Maria' says she was 15, ask the audience to put their hands up if they are 15.
- Use the play as a film script. Learn the lines then film it being acted out.
- Keyword summary **online** at:  
**[www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)**

**Please note: It is advisable not to use different accents as this can distract from the content of the play and may cause offence.**

# BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE

## MAIN SCRIPT



Show slide 1



Show slide 2

### NARRATOR

Have you ever felt angry about something that was wrong? Did you want to do something to put it right? Let's meet someone who did just that, the British lawyer, Peter Benenson, who founded Amnesty International.

### NARRATOR

Mr Benenson, please can you tell us how you started Amnesty International?

### PETER BENENSON

It was a wet November day. I was travelling on the London tube. I read a story about two students in Portugal having a drink in a bar. They stood up and raised their glasses in a toast. They said just one word – 'Freedom'. They were arrested by the secret police. They were sentenced to seven years in prison for their simple gesture.



Show slide 3

### NARRATOR

What did you do?

### PETER BENENSON

Frankly I was outraged. I felt a sickening sense of powerlessness. Those students were prisoners of conscience. Their right to think and to speak had been denied. I wanted to flood the Portuguese Embassy with protests. You could open your newspaper any day of the week and read about somebody somewhere being imprisoned, tortured or executed because their ideas were unacceptable to their government.

How could I channel this anger into effective action? I persuaded the Editor of The Observer to give me a page in his newspaper. I wrote about our basic human rights and the need to defend them.

Here it is.



Show slide 4

I invited people to join me in a mass campaign for justice. I called it 'Appeal for Amnesty'. In a very short time, hundreds of people wrote to me to join.



Show slide 5



Show slide 6

### DIANA

Hello. My name is Diana Redhouse. I was one of the first people to join Amnesty International. I am an artist. Peter Benenson asked me to design an emblem for the organisation.

Here is the symbol I designed – it's Amnesty's candle of light and hope encircled by the barbed wire of imprisonment and cruelty

### NARRATOR

It's a great logo, Diana, but what does Amnesty actually do?

### DIANA

Amnesty International's candle lights up some very dark places in the world. Our researchers tell us about a situation where somebody's human rights are being abused. We draw attention to what is going on. We make a public fuss. We call for action to right the wrong.

One of our first cases was an African poet who had been arrested, flogged in front of his family and held without charge or trial. We wrote an appeal like this.



Show slide 7

### VOICE 1

Dear President

We are writing to you about a poet from Angola, Dr Neto. He has been tortured. He is imprisoned on an island thousands of miles from his home. He has committed no crime. He is locked up just for his opinions. We call for the immediate release of this prisoner of conscience. Stop the torture and free him.

### NARRATOR

But does anyone in power take the slightest notice of protest letters? It seems a bit unlikely to me.



Show slide 8

### MARIA

My name is Maria. I grew up in Uruguay (pronounced Oo roog why). I married a trade union organiser and I became pregnant. When the Army took over our country, they were after my husband. He had to flee the country. I went to stay with my parents. My baby daughter was born. Then the police came to the house. My husband was not there so I was arrested. I was just 15. In jail I was interrogated.

### GUARD

*Where is your husband?*

### MARIA

*I told you. I don't know.*

### GUARD

*Tell us where he is and who his friends are or we will torture you.*

### MARIA

*He left me. I really know nothing more.*

### MARIA

They played recordings of my baby crying to try to get information out of me.

Every time they asked me a question that I didn't answer, they would torture me. They pulled out my teeth one by one. When there were no teeth left they told me they were going to shoot me. Then one of them gave me a postcard. It was in English.

### VOICE 2

'Dear Maria,  
We are thinking of you'.  
Greetings from Margaret  
Amnesty International  
Scotland

### MARIA

*I thought: There must be some mistake. This card isn't for me. I don't speak English. Who is Margaret? Where is Scotland? What does this candle mean? What is this 'Amnesty'? I don't understand.*

More and more cards arrived. What on earth was this all about?

### GUARD

*Step into the office, Prisoner 779. We have been getting so many letters and phone calls and pressure from all over the place that it has been decided to release you, but you have to go into exile. We'll drive you over the border to Argentina.*

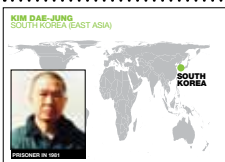
### NARRATOR

*By now, Amnesty had become a worldwide organisation with over 100,000 members who campaigned for hundreds of prisoners of conscience like Maria. They worked against unfair trials, ill treatment, forced 'disappearances' or secret imprisonment and political killings in many countries.*



Show slide 9

In 1977 Amnesty was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work against torture.



Show slide 10

## KIM, DAE-JUNG

My name is Kim Dae-Jung (pronounced Kim Day Joong)

I was an opposition politician in South Korea. I was involved in the struggle for democracy. It was a dangerous activity in those days. I spent years in prison. Then they sentenced me to death. I was on 'death row' waiting to be hanged.

Amnesty International members campaigned for me.

First my death sentence was changed to 20 years in jail. Then that was reduced to a year. Then I was released. I have no doubt whatsoever that Amnesty International saved my life.



Show slide 11

Fifteen years later I became President of South Korea. I won the Nobel Prize. I worked for peace. I campaigned to abolish the death penalty.



Show slide 12

## VOICE 3

To the Minister of Justice.

I am writing about Helen who has been locked up with 17 other Christian women in a metal shipping container in an army camp in the desert. This is cruel and inhuman punishment. Why is she there?

**Please free her now.**



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## VOICE 4

I am a school student in the UK.

In assembly we have just heard about three young men from your country. They organised a peaceful protest. They wrote slogans on balloons. They sprayed graffiti on some walls. They floated little paper boats on the Salween River in Burma.

They have been sentenced to 37 years' imprisonment. They are political prisoners.

**Please take steps to release them.**



Show slide 14



Show slide 15

## MARIA

Since experiencing human rights abuse first-hand, I am now a human rights defender and campaign on behalf of others.

Sir, I am ringing you about the case of the lawyer, Nasrin  
(pronounce Naz-reen)

She has been sent to prison in Iran for appearing in a video without wearing proper Islamic dress and for campaigning on women's rights. She has just been sentenced to 11 years in jail. I belong to Amnesty International. I was a prisoner of conscience myself. **Please free Nasrin now!**



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## VOICE 5

I am a student in Year 9 from a school in Hackney, London.

I am in the Amnesty International Youth Group in my school. We all use the Internet every day. It is not a crime.

I am using the Internet right now to ask you to free the Chinese journalist Shi Tao (pronounce Shee Taow - rhymes with 'now'.)

He sent an email about a demonstration that took place in Beijing in 1989. Shi Tao has been sent to jail for 10 years just for using the Internet to expose human rights abuse.

**I say FREE SHI TAO. DO IT NOW!!**



Show slide 17



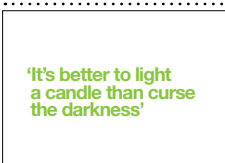
Show slide 18

## NARRATOR

Amnesty International grew out of Peter Benenson's rage against injustice. The organisation he founded is 50 years old this year. Amnesty now has more than 3 million members around the world, including many young people. They take action on human rights abuses such as the death penalty, poverty and unfair imprisonment. They work to protect people wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied.

## ALL VOICES READ TOGETHER

**It's better to light a candle  
Than curse the darkness**



Show slide 19



Show slide 20

Shine a light on human rights.  
Find out what you can do.  
Visit Amnesty's website.